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~~J. P. H. H. H.~~

Gilbert Godfrey Dalton
Everett, Mass.
March 1924

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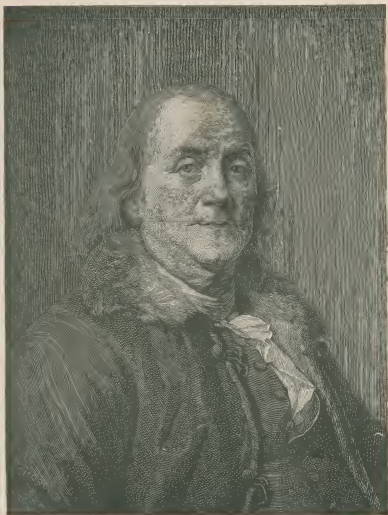
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AN INTRODUCTION
TO
AMERICAN LITERATURE

BY
HENRY S. PANCOAST

*Author of "An Introduction to English Literature" and
"Representative English Literature"*

SECOND EDITION, REVISED

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To my Sisters,
WHO HAVE BEEN IN THIS,
AS IN ALL OTHER THINGS,
MY CONSTANT AND READY HELPERS.

“Democracy is still on trial. It must justify itself or die. Lowell states one of the standards thus : ‘Democracy must show its capacity for producing, not a higher average man, but the highest possible types of manhood in all its manifold varieties, or it is a failure.’ . . . That this highest type of manhood may be attained in our country, under the existing opportunities of self-development, has been frequently claimed, and if this life be possible, then the expression of it should be also. The highest possible type of literature should succeed the highest possible type of manhood. . . . This national literature must be the development, consciously or unconsciously, of all the best literary powers of the best American people. Such a national literature is indispensable to the union of these States—not that union based upon the consent of the governed, and bound by political regulations of their making, but the essential union of common sentiments and ideals secured by a common pride in intellectual achievement, and a partnership in patriotism.”—*Professor Charles W. Kent's Inaugural Address on Literature and Life.*

Sillat Godfrey Toliver
Everett H. Mass
March, 1924

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

I HAVE tried to do two things in revising this little book, written now some fifteen years ago: first, to make such comparatively slight corrections in the text as the mere lapse of time rendered necessary, and second, to consider those less obvious changes in the spirit and trend of our literature that lie below the surface.

A book that touches on contemporary writers soon stands in need of revision. Old authors die, new authors arise; old books are forgotten or lose their luster, new books demand recognition. During the fifteen years since this book was written, Time has placed "the fatal asterisk of death" after the names of Bret Harte, Mark Twain, Edward Everett Hale, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and many of their literary contemporaries. A manual of American literature prepared while these men were alive, must be amended so as at least to record their deaths if it is to continue serviceable. After fifteen years, too, even such simple bibliographies as those in the present book need to be revised, and enlarged by the addition of more recent works.

But something more seemed to be required than such obvious and necessary alterations made in the interest of simple accuracy. In our modern America things move quickly, and in so young a literature as ours even fifteen years is not an inconsiderable stretch of time. Many of us, more especially those who live in the older states of the East, see at first but little evidence of progress in our recent literature. Many feel that so far from advancing, we are not maintaining, or even approaching the standards set by our best writers of the last century. To speak frankly, this was my own impression when I set about the task of reviewing the literary accomplishment of America in recent years. But natural as such a feeling is, I have come to believe that it is founded on a misconception of what is actually taking place in our literary and national development. One cannot really get at the truth in this matter by comparing Hawthorne with Mark Twain, or Longfellow with James Whitecomb Riley, for our literary progress is not to be measured wholly by immediate results, but at least in part by the nature, the aim, and the promise of the new and more distinctively American literature even now in the making. The conditions under which this new literature is taking shape, the traits which distinguish it, the hopes for its future, all these are worthy of the most careful study. It may seem hazardous to discuss such debatable matters in an elementary

text-book, but I believe that even a young student of our literature will be broadened and stimulated by the effort to understand something of the life and thought of the present as well as of the past. I have, accordingly, rewritten the chapter on literature since the Civil War, including in it many contemporary books and writers usually omitted in a work of this character. In this chapter my object has been to study the general trend and character of our literature during these recent years. To do this, it was necessary to refer to many living writers, but these have only been touched upon by way of illustration, and in their relation to the literary tendencies or movements of which they are a part. The place of such writers as Franklin, Emerson, or Cooper, has been at least measurably fixed by time; the position of living writers, whose work it may be is not yet done, is changing and uncertain, their ultimate rank cannot yet be determined. With the best intentions, moreover, a contemporary estimate of such men is apt to be too largely colored by personal preferences, and rendered untrustworthy by a too limited knowledge of the whole field. To mention all the notable American writers now living would be as impossible in a book of this kind, as it would be unfair and presumptuous to attempt any critical estimate of their work. If I have mentioned many writers that others would have excluded, and excluded many that others would

have mentioned, I can only say that agreement in matters of this kind is impossible, and that in any case, I have not presumed to criticise living authors, but merely attempted to follow the broad literary movements of our time.

I take this opportunity to express my appreciation of the friendly help given me by Mr. Percy V. D. Shelly of the University of Pennsylvania in revising the Study Lists.

H. S. P.

July 10, 1912.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE plan and purpose of this book can be stated in a few words. It is intended as a companion-book to my "Introduction to English Literature," and it has been prepared—so far as the nature of the subject permitted—according to the same general scheme.

The first thing required of a book of this character is that it shall really bring the reader into vital relation with the best works in the literature of which it treats,—that it shall induce him to read or re-read them with both delight and understanding. I have tried to do this by treating our greater authors at comparative length; by making their personality as real and living as I could; by adding some critical discussion of their chief works; and by furnishing study lists containing suggestions for reading and bibliographical references.

Without question our literature does include certain works which we should know not merely because they were written by Americans, but because they are veritably literature. The importance of such romances as *The Scarlet Letter*, such essays as Emer-

son's *Nature*, such ballads as the best of Longfellow's or Whittier's, is more than national. These works have their place in the mental life of every liberally educated person. It must, however, be admitted that when compared with that of many other nations America's total contribution to the world's literature is both inferior in character and insignificant in amount. If American literature had no claim upon us other than its intrinsic literary value, the proportion of time which it could justly demand from us would be comparatively small. But the study of particular authors and their works is by no means the only reason for a systematic study of our literature. That study has, or should have, an interest for us because of its close and important relation to our national life. Our intellectual growth as evidenced in our literature is a part of our past and the earnest of our future.

Stopford Brooke, in a recent book of his, has said: "True history lies, not in the statement of events of which we cannot be certain how they occurred, but in the statement of how men at any time thought and felt. . . . The history of the race is in the history of what men thought and felt; and it is written, not in annals, not in chronicles, not in State papers, not in the stores of the record offices of nations, but in the literatures of the tribes and peoples of mankind. There is truth worth knowing; all the rest is pleasant enough, but it is only more or less probable in comparison with the certainty we attain when we read a poem or a story of how men thought

and what they felt.”* Thus our study means much more than the study for their purely literary value of the few masterpieces which are likely to become part of the common heritage of English-speaking people. Besides these there are many works which should be studied by every American, if for nothing else, because of their relation to our national history and ideals. The *Biglow Papers*, the *Harvard Commemoration Ode*, Whittier’s tribute to Lincoln,—all these, and others like them, have their place in the education of American youth. They should be given the fullest chance to do their work of quickening our national conscience and lifting us to nobler life. And it is not books only that help to elevate. The personal example of such author-patriots as Lowell, Whittier, and Curtis, of such stainless scholars as Longfellow, should be a most widespread and potent influence for good. In a great commercial nation such as ours, the inspiration from the life and aims of the scholar and the poet is especially needed to correct the tendency to strive only for the commonplace and the practical.

Realizing, then, that a large part of the deepest life of America is recorded in its literature and inseparable from it, I have accordingly tried to present our literary history in its true relation to the history of our people and to make two points especially clear: first, that our literature is, in its origin, a branch of that of England, and that its relation to the mother

* “The Old Testament and Modern Life,” pp. 195-197.

literature and its gradual divergence from it must be constantly kept in view; second, that our literature, springing up originally in separate English colonies, is in its beginning a literature of sections, and that its history is the history of a gradual approximation towards a national unity of character. The appreciation of this last fact is, in my judgment, an indispensable preliminary to any real grasp of the meaning of our literature's growth.

H. S. P.

GERMANTOWN, Dec. 13, 1897.

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GENERAL REFERENCE BOOKS

1. **General History and Criticism.**—W. P. Trent, *History of American Literature, 1607-1865* (1903); Barrett Wendell, *Literary History of America*; G. E. Woodberry, *America in Literature*; J. Nichol, *American Literature* (Edinburgh, 1882), has the advantage of being written from a foreign and therefore detached point of view. Whitcomb's *Chronological Outlines of American Literature* (1906). **CRITICISM.**—E. C. Stedman, *Poets of America*; W. C. Brownell, *American Prose Masters*.

COLLECTIONS AND ANTHOLOGIES.—Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature, from the earliest settlement to the present time* (11 vols.); E. C. Stedman's *American Anthology, 1787-1899*; B. E. Stevenson's *Poems of American History*; Eggleston's *American War Ballads*; Brander Matthews' *American Familiar Verse*.

LITERATURE OF DIFFERENT LOCALITIES.—*New England.*—W. C. Lawton, *The New England Poets*; H. A. Clarke, *The Poets, New England* (1911); R. R. Wilson, *New England in Letters*. *Middle States.*—E. P. Oberholtzer, *The Literary History of Philadelphia*. *South.*—Moses, *The Literature of the South*; W. P. Trent, *Southern Writers* (selections in prose and verse); C. W. Hubner, *Representative Southern Poets*; Carl Holliday, *The History of Southern Literature*. *West (Indiana).*—M. Nicholson, *The Hoosiers*.

2. **American History.**—A. B. Hart's *Essentials in American History* (from the discovery to the present day), and E. Channing's *Student's History of the United States*, will be found reliable and convenient for general reference. *American History Told by Contemporaries* (4 vols.) may also be used with advantage. The longer standard histories of the United States, especially those like McMaster's and Adams', which deal with social conditions, will be found helpful.

AN INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

THE term American Literature, although firmly established by custom, and sufficiently well understood, is, in itself, both inexact and misleading. If we were not acquainted with the meaning which usage has given to the

**American
literature
defined.**

words, we should naturally understand them to include all the literature produced in America, whether before or after its discovery by Europeans. But, rightly or wrongly, the term American literature has received by ordinary use and acceptance a far more restricted meaning. It does not embrace the entire literature of the American continent, as European literature includes that of all Europe; but only that of a definite part of North America—the part now the United States. We dwellers in these United States, holding, as we do, the first place in the Western World, think and speak of ourselves as the Americans, distinguishing Canadians, Brazilians, or Mexicans,—inhabitants as they are of our common continent—by the name of that particular country to which they respectively belong. In the same way, by American literature we mean our literature; just as by the

American flag we mean our stars and stripes, or by an American citizen, a citizen of the United States. On the other hand, we must remember that American literature does not mean merely the literature of the United States, for it is far older than our national life. It means simply the American branch of English literature set by colonization in fresh earth; it means the continuation of English literature within the limits of what has become the United States, by people English in their speech, English to a considerable extent by inheritance, and English in the original character of their civilization. Of course this literature is now, and has been for more than a century, the product of a politically independent nation, to the making of whose people almost every race and country has now contributed. It is true that our intellectual dependence on England, at first almost unlimited, has gradually lessened, and that for more than a century our Republic has been moving slowly towards self-confidence and independence in literary methods and in thought. Doubtless, as our civilization becomes more compact and mature, as our national ideals grow clearer, our character more firmly set and defined, this divergence between American and English literature will increase, and our coming writers will embody with growing force and distinctness the national life and spirit that will stir around them. But while we may expect to be more and more truly American in the future, we must remember that we were emphatically English in the past; that our literature in its origin was not the voice of a

united and independent nation, but the disconnected and stammering utterance of a straggling line of English colonies, fighting for a foothold along the coast of an inhospitable land. For about one half of its entire history,—extending in all over less than three centuries,—what we call American literature was in fact nothing more than one of the colonial literatures of England. Originally the provincial offshoot of the greatest literature of the modern world, American literature has grown up under the shadow of the English, slowly modified by new physical, social, and political conditions. As truly as the American flag represents our political separation from England, so truly does our American literature, in its birth and growth, exhibit our intellectual dependence on the mother-land; a dependence which has been weakened by the development of our national spirit, but which even yet, to a considerable extent, remains.

It is clear that, by reason of its origin, American literature stands in a different position from that occupied by many of the great literatures of the world. The United States is a young nation, but we Americans are not a young people; we are an old people, for our ancestors brought with them a mature civilization when they landed on this new soil to possess and subdue it. One of the most truly national of our poets has spoken of America as that

American
and other
literatures.

“Strange, new land that yit wast never young.”

The literature of Greece reflects the normal progress of a people from the primitive life of a young nation to a state of high civilization and maturity. But unlike Greece, or even England, America has never passed through all these natural stages of a people's growth, and our literature cannot be expected to express them. In certain great departments of literature, in certain materials for the creation of literature, America must of necessity be comparatively or wholly wanting. At no time could we have produced the rude chant, or primitive epic, because when our English forefathers first settled here they had passed far beyond the stage of national development which makes such creations possible. The cultivated Greek was born into a world where beautiful myths and legends were a living part of the very landscape: our writers, living in a land comparatively free from all the hallowed and inspiring associations of the past, can reach the earlier and fresher stages of a race's mental life only by forcing an entrance into an aboriginal world in which we, as a people, have no share. If we would think ourselves back into that dim and legendary land of wonder and beauty which great nations inhabit in their childhood, we must turn, as Longfellow does in *Hiawatha*, to the stories of an alien race, or we must cross the sea and enter the national nursery of the Greek, or Celt, or English. We must therefore think of our literature, not only as a provincial continuation of the English, but as beginning at a comparatively late period in the life of that race of which we are a branch.

But while we may fail to find among the great historic literatures of Europe any one which has come into existence under conditions exactly similar to our own, there exists outside of Europe a group of rising literatures among which ours properly finds a place. The United States is by no means the only country in which the civilization and literature of England are being carried forward under new conditions. For centuries, and especially during the last one hundred and fifty years, the English people have been building outside of the narrow limits of their island a great Empire that is now ninety-one times as large as the mother-land. The English flag waves over tropic India and among Canadian forests; in Australasia, in the distant Southern ocean, the English have raised up a rich, progressive, and powerful state; in half-mapped Africa is the wonderful spectacle of this widening English rule. It is not English rule merely, it is England herself, her Christian civilization, her institutions, her law, her language, and her literature that are thus reaching out to the ends of the world. To-day nearly four hundred millions of people, of widely different race, language, and inheritance, acknowledge her supremacy, while to more than one hundred millions, including the people of the United States, her language and her literature are native and inherited possessions. Such facts mark an epoch, not only in the history of the English people, but in the history of English literature. This "expansion of England" means also the expansion of English litera-

True place
of American
literature.

ture; it means that the English genius, which has been revealing itself through literature for more than twelve hundred years, has won for its use fresh materials for literary art by coming into contact with new and infinitely varied life. Our true place in literary history is as one of the literatures of this greater England. We have been brought into being by the same great historic movement; we inherit the same civilization, the same traditions, the same classics, the same national traits; we are sprung from the same race, and the speech of Shakespeare—England's poet and ours—is on our lips.

Nevertheless, along with all these points of likeness between our American literature and those of the English colonies, there are certain marked points of difference. Each of the colonial literatures has already a spirit and character of its own, while that of the United States, in addition to all other causes of divergence, has back of it the great fact of our independent national life and ideals.

The world stands but at the beginning of this greater English literature. The creation of it is a world-wide movement, in which we seem destined to bear no insignificant a part. We have a noble inheritance and great competitors; and if, as yet, we have done but little, the long future lies before us. Only the opening chapters in the story of American literature can as yet be told, for we have only begun to build what we hope will be one of the great literatures of the world.

Having gained some idea of the relation which our

literature bears to others in the present and in the past, let us now try to grasp the general course of our literary history, and the main periods into which it naturally divides itself. The literature of a people is but the written expression of its life. Some men in a nation express their feelings, ambitions, or ideas chiefly through their actions; they are statesmen, soldiers, inventors, merchants: with others, this inner life finds its most complete expression not in deeds but in written words; they are poets, novelists, historians, or philosophers. Both the men of deeds and the men of words have their part and place, and both classes of men represent in some degree the hidden central life of the community to which they belong. Since the true life of a people is revealed to us partly through what it does and partly by what it writes, its history and its literature are inseparably connected. We can study the growth of the American people in the fortitude and courage of its early settlers, in its migration westward from ocean to ocean, in the deeds of Franklin, Washington, or Lincoln; or we can approach it from another side, and read its story in the words of the Puritan preachers, in the oratory of Patrick Henry or Daniel Webster, and in the books of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Lowell. As the history and the literature of a nation spring from the same source, the study of either without the other must be incomplete. In our study of American literature, therefore, we must first appreciate its vital connection with the history of the American people.

Periods of
American
literature.

American history is the story of the making of a united and independent nation out of a number of scattered and disconnected colonies, and of the building of many foreign elements into the fabric of a great State. It tells us of the planting and growth of these colonies, of their separate life and interests, of their petty jealousy and distrust; it shows us the forces which brought them nearer together and drove them to concerted action; it relates their united resistance to English misrule; their attempt at a confederation of semi-independent States, and the final establishment of a federal government. Through our whole history we can see forces at work which tend to hold back or break up this building of a united people. Thousands of miles of territory have been added to the original thirteen States, many millions of foreigners have brought into our midst a strange medley of races and tongues, one great section of the country has risen in arms against the rest; yet in spite of all dangers our steady and impressive advance towards unity has gone forward, and the substantial integrity, the original character of the nation has been marvellously preserved. Thus one continuous and leading motive of our national history is that progress from diversity towards national unity which finds expression in the country's motto.

The general course of our literary history but follows these broad features in the history of our country at large, so that the main periods of our literary and political history substantially correspond. Thus the literature naturally falls into the following divisions,

each of which represents likewise a stage in our historical progress.

I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD, cir. 1607—cir. 1765.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONALITY, cir. 1765—cir. 1815.

III. THE LITERATURE OF THE REPUBLIC, cir. 1809 to the present day.

I. THE COLONIAL PERIOD—Cir. 1607—cir. 1765

Our literature had its beginning in no one center or community. During the early years of our history the Colonies of the South, of the North, and of the Middle region were separated from each other by the barriers of forest and wilderness, and by their underlying difference in spirit and origin. In each Colonial group, therefore, literature had an independent beginning, and, for a considerable period, a separate development. The crude literary efforts of the several Colonies bear the stamp of their local individuality. Our Colonial literature is consequently a literature of sections, each of which must be studied separately to be rightly understood.

II. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONALITY—Cir. 1765—cir. 1815

When these isolated Colonies drew together and finally became compacted into a nation, their literature ceased to be wholly a literature of sections, and expressed this new national spirit. The forces which drew the Colonies together politically, exerted precisely the same influence on their intellectual and

literary life. In the oratory which echoed the common antagonism to England, in the songs and verses of the Revolution, in the effort to manufacture a national literature which followed the establishment of our independence, we see that the spirit of the whole people has become stronger, for the time, than the spirit of any section. In this period, therefore, our literature may be thought of as passing out of the purely local stage, and reaching, at least at times, a national note, under the new fervor of patriotism. This may further be regarded as a transition-time between the old Colonial literature and that comparatively modern and more national literature which begins with the advent of Washington Irving. By 1815, or the conclusion of the War of 1812, the country may be thought of as placed on a firm and permanently independent basis, an era of internal progress and prosperity fairly opening out before it.

III. THE LITERATURE OF THE REPUBLIC

1809 to the present day

Although this period covers less than one third of our entire literary history, nearly all of our most lasting and important contributions to literature have been produced within its comparatively narrow limits. It has been a time of rapid national growth, during which our best energies have been concentrated on the development of our vast material resources, and on the task of building up and governing a great nation. Yet, while the genius of America has thus manifested itself chiefly in active and directly practical

pursuits, our progress in literature has been a distinct, if subordinate, work of the epoch. The territory held by the republic has been greatly increased, and our literary life has extended over an ever-widening area. The center of literary production has shifted from place to place along the Eastern Coast. Beginning definitely in the Middle States with the Knickerbocker school, or the writers that surrounded or followed Irving in New York city, the onward movement was taken up about 1830-35 by the great writers of New England, at Cambridge and at Concord. (Oliver Wendell Holmes, the last of this group, which includes ²Emerson, ³Hawthorne, ⁴Longfellow, and Lowell, has but lately left us, and, by his death, definitely ended what has been so far our most memorable literary movement. Before the death of Holmes, however, New England had gradually lost that leadership in literature which she had held during the middle years of our century; new writers have since arisen in the South and in the West, and we may now look forward to a still fuller and wider expression, through literature, of the nation's life.

Poetry is the mythical expression
of beauty or imagination above
the vulgar remembrance of the ideal
and therefore the highest and
most permanent form of literature.
The best thing of poetry
who could apprehend Dante or
Shakespeare, as well as Ingres, Paul
was impossible in early France.

PART I

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

Cir. 1607-Cir. 1765

CHAPTER I

See page 9

THE COLONIES

OUR American Republic was made by the confederation of English Colonies, joined by the struggle for independence, and welded closer together by the advantages that came to all from union. Our American literature, in its later, or national, stage, was a continuation of the literary beginnings in these several Colonies. However slight the value of this Colonial literature may be, regarded purely from the literary side, when we reflect that these early writers were preparing the way for the greater men who were to come after, we see that their work has an effect and meaning which make it impossible for us to pass it by. We must go back to these Colonies and their literature as we would trace a river to its source: so only can we appreciate the origin of much that we find about us in the United States of to-day.

With the single exception of Georgia, the colonization of North America by the English was the work of the seventeenth century. To know what these

The
Colonies.

Colonies were, we must remember what England herself was during that memorable epoch, for the Colonies were substantially so many offshoots of England set in a new soil. For Englishmen the seventeenth century was chiefly a time of civil conflict. Without, Spain had been humbled; but within, monarchy strove with the rising spirit of liberty: Cavaliers with Roundheads; the Church with the Puritan spirit of dissent. The land was a house divided against itself. Two Englands seem struggling for being within the limits of one little island, and the whole surface character of the nation changes as one or the other of the two contending parties gains control. During the middle years of the century, or from about 1649 to 1660, England is a land at least nominally republican in government, and apparently Puritan in religion. Its prevailing temper seems sober, austere, perhaps too often narrow even to fanaticism; it is sombre-hued, pleasure-fearing, restrained. But after the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the prevailing spirit and character of the people appear to be suddenly transformed. On every side are light-hearted pleasure-seekers; on every side gayety and color, dissoluteness and drunkenness. The nation seems to be possessed with an incurable levity, and its "merry monarch" dies with a cynical jest on his lips.

Suppose that representatives of each of these two

Englands, the land of the Puritan and the land of the Cavalier, had been taken out of the confusion of conflict, and placed in a new land where each was free to develop untrammelled by the influence of the other. In such a case you would have separate continuations of two distinct and antagonistic Englands. This actually took place in the new land of America.

Cavalier
and Puritan
in
America.

The first permanent English settlement in this country was made at Jamestown, near Chesapeake Bay, in 1607; the second was at Plymouth, on Massachusetts Bay, in 1620. The first settlement was the beginning of Virginia, the most influential and typical of the Colonies of the South; the second was the beginning of Massachusetts, which came to hold among the New England Colonies of the North a correspondingly influential and typical place. When we examine the objects and composition of these two typical settlements, we find that in a broad, general way they are respectively a continuation of Cavalier and of Puritan England. New England, indeed, is rigidly and exclusively Puritan in its population and spirit, while Virginia and her sister colonies, formed of more mixed elements, are only approximately Cavalier; but, speaking broadly, each group of settlements maintains those rival ideals of social and religious life which during the seventeenth century had fought for supremacy in the mother land.

The chief causes of this diversity of character between two settlements founded almost at the same time are the widely different motives which prompted

their establishment, and the influence of widely different natural surroundings upon the Virginia and the South. Colonists themselves. In general terms, Virginia was settled for glory or for gold, New England for the sake of religious conviction. It has been said that the one was the "offspring of economical distress, and the other of ecclesiastical tyranny."*

The scheme of colonizing Virginia by the London company had the sanction and support of the royal power. Among the Colonists were adventurers, roving and intrepid soldiers of fortune, gold-hunters, idlers, and "poor gentlemen," made reckless by their necessities. The Virginia enterprise drew such men as a magnet does steel filings, for the New World of the West still shone in the popular imagination as a kind of earthly paradise, where gold could be got without labor. These wild ideas and extravagant expectations were echoed on the London stage, doubtless with a touch of satirical exaggeration, for the theatres were then the "brief chronicles of the time." "I tell thee," says Seagull, in Marston's *Eastward Ho!* (1605), "gold is more plentiful there than copper is with us; and for as much red copper as I can bring I'll have thrice the weight in gold." And he adds to many other attractions of the new land, that "there we shall have no more law than conscience, and not too much of either."† What wonder that

* Doyle's *English Colonies in America*: Virginia, i. 101, etc.

† *Eastward Ho!* Act III. Sc. 3.

the discontented, the bankrupt, and the enterprising looked to such a land as a refuge, a place to repair ruined fortunes, and to risk all on a new chance! What wonder, either, that the statesmen turned to it as a means of relieving the country of some of its superfluous population!

Such, then, were the circumstances which led to the planting of Virginia. But while the first colonists included many from the ranks of the unfortunate, the avaricious, or the criminal, they were later reënforced by many representatives of the best English stock. After the overthrow of the monarchy in England many of the Cavaliers emigrated thither; there, too, were younger sons of the nobles, and men from the upper and middle classes. From the early days of Virginia we find a touch of the pomp and affluence of an aristocratic society, beside which the pinched and rigid life of New England seems more than ever harsh and meagre. Lord Delaware, one of Virginia's early governors, "came surrounded by the pomp of the Old World, with a train of liveried servants, whose gorgeous dresses must have had a strange effect in the dark Virginia forests." * Moreover, many local conditions helped to develop a society of an aristocratic type. The richness of the soil, and the great importance of the tobacco crop, tended to make the South a region of huge plantations, while the use of slave-labor, which began very early, further increased the wealth and almost despotic power of

* Lodge's *English Colonies in America*, p. 7.

these great landed proprietors. Virginia, during the early half of the eighteenth century, was in many respects a provincial copy of the rural England of that time. The life of the Virginia country gentleman on his broad acres did not greatly differ from that led by the English country squire of the time. The clergy of the Established Church had the low moral tone and lack of spirituality which in the reigns of Anne and the early Georges too often disgraced their English brethren. But life in Virginia was even more lonely and narrowing than in the country districts of contemporary England. There was practically no town life, and the wretched state of the roads was an obstacle to a social intercourse such as was quickening and developing the mental life of Colonial New England. In a community so widely settled, with no great centers of population, the establishment of schools was necessarily difficult. The sons of the wealthy were taught at home, and perhaps completed their education in England, or in the better-equipped Colonies of the North; but among the masses illiteracy was general. We find no trace of that sympathy with popular education which from the first was characteristic of the more northern Colonies, but rather signs of a selfish and aristocratic prejudice against it. In 1671 the royalist governor, Sir William Berkeley, wrote concerning the condition of Virginia: "I thank God there are no free schools, nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has

divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both." This mediæval policy of keeping the people ignorant in order to repress freedom of thought, and to render the masses subservient to rule, was unfortunately not confined to Berkeley. Throughout the entire Colonial period the South was without any provision for general education.* Even in higher education, reserved of necessity for the sons of the wealthier classes, the South was conspicuously backward.† The printing-press, which stands beside the public school as one of the great agencies of our civilization, was also introduced late, and, even when obtained, was subjected to a supervision stifling to intellectual growth and freedom of thought. There seems to have been no press in Virginia before 1681, more than seventy years after the settlement, and a few years later the governor was instructed by the authorities in England "to allow no person to use a printing-press on any occasion whatsoever." Yet forty years before this the great Puritan John Milton had put forth, in his *Areopagitica*, his daring claim for the freedom of the press, and England had gained that freedom for herself

* "There is no indication in the statutes of any desire to provide education, and no system of public schools was even attempted before 1776."—Lodge, *English Colonies in America*, p. 74.

† A college was indeed founded in 1692, at Williamsburg, then the capital of Virginia, called the College of William and Mary; but during its early history it was rather a boys' boarding-school than a college in any proper sense, as nothing was taught beyond the rudiments.

almost at the time she denied it to her Colony. The entire blame for these unfortunate conditions cannot fairly be laid to the desire of the English Government to stifle the free spirit of the people; it is partly attributable to an aristocratic and autocratic spirit among the ruling classes in Virginia. Virginia being in many ways a continuation of monarchical and Cavalier rather than of republican or Puritan England, there was not that united protest against an undue authority which would have made its exercise difficult if not impossible. So that a recent writer even goes so far as to declare that "thought was not free in Virginia, religion was not free in Virginia, and this by the explicit and reiterated choice of the people of Virginia." *

After reviewing such facts, we must acknowledge that many conditions of life in the Colonial South were distinctly unfavorable to any great achievement in literature. As a rule, great writers have been dwellers in cities; the best literature is apt to be born amid the thronging centers of human competition and activity, where life moves swiftly and with a dramatic energy and complexity, where thought is called forth by the incessant pressure of experience, and mind is quickened by constant contact with mind. Life in the South was agricultural, isolated; the town, the focus of mental activity, did not exist. Indeed to this day it has felt the want of a literary center, comparable to Philadelphia in the early years of this century,

* Tyler's *History of American Literature*, vol. i. p. 90.

and to Boston, New York, and Chicago at a later period. The ideal of the upper classes was rather that of the great noble than of the student or man of letters. Besides all this, the deliciously mild and somewhat enervating climate, together with the luxuriant richness of the soil, encouraged a life of indolence. While the intense and wiry New Englander made himself lean over the doctrines of free will and election, or, in the frigid atmosphere of his stoveless meeting-house, listened to long sermons on the future torments of the wicked, the comfortable Virginian laid wagers on cock-fights, or celebrated the victories of the race-track.

Yet, while we are compelled to admit her shortcomings, it is plain that Virginia had many of the elements of a great State. Her faults were mainly those of the dominant class in that early-eighteenth-century England of which she was the colonial representative. On the other hand, life in Virginia was sturdy, healthy, hospitable, and by no means lacking in sterling and manly virtues. The men were brave and chivalric, the women charming and devoted; home-life beautiful, and family affection strong. If the South could not give us many writers of books, it gave us leaders of men, who proved the magnificent qualities of the race in moments of national peril. When the country stood on the brink of the Revolutionary War it was the Virginia Assembly, under Patrick Henry's eloquence, that led the way in which Massachusetts followed; it was Richard Henry Lee, a Virginian, who

The greatness of Virginia.

introduced into Congress the resolution declaring the Colonies independent; above all, it was Virginia who gave us Washington and Marshall. Yet while the South was thus foremost in action, great in the halls of debate, on the battle-field, or in the court of justice, we must look to New England, rather than to Virginia, for the source of our literary and intellectual life. The great Colonies of the South and of the North were to develop on different lines, but it was the ideals of the North that were to have the largest share in the making of the whole nation, and that, at least in a modified form, were destined to prevail.

In studying the character and history of New England we are impressed first of all with the nature of the motive that prompted its settlement, **New** for in this motive lies both the cause **England.** and the explanation of much that is peculiar in its subsequent life and literature. As a rule, the founding of a colony is the work of a motley crowd of emigrants and adventurers,—an ill-assorted company of men representing almost every shade of social condition, of religion, politics, and moral character. Such, as we have seen, were the elements which the hope of gain first drew to the rich land of Virginia. But the single and unworldly purpose which dictated the making of New England excluded from the Colony all but the few resolute spirits who shared in that purpose, and who were of a temper strong enough to suffer for it. It brought together men of one mind and of one faith, and the State which they created was a wonderfully perfect

embodiment of their ideas. "We came hither," wrote one of their clergymen in the early days of the Colony,—“we came hither because we would have our posterity settled under the pure and full dispensation of the Gospel, defended by rulers that should be of ourselves.” It was this motive which gave to New England a unity which the other Colonies, with their mixed elements, did not possess. Not only was New England, unlike New York, Pennsylvania, and many of the other Colonies, settled almost entirely by men of purely English stock, but her early settlers were drawn exclusively from those progressive, protesting, and liberty-loving elements in England that in the critical struggle of the seventeenth century saved the nation from tyranny and misrule. It was the Puritan who, almost at the same time, preserved and enlarged the ancient liberties of England and carried liberty over seas to plant it in a new world.

These Puritan builders of New England have left so deep a stamp, not only on that great section that they founded, but on our greatest litera- **The**
ture and on the history of our whole **Puritans.**
nation, that we must try to do full justice to their character and their ideas. The high average of intelligence and character among the New England colonists is one of the first facts to impress us. A great proportion of them came from Lincolnshire and the neighboring counties, then the great stronghold of Puritanism. They were mostly earnest, thoughtful, God-fearing men, of the middle and yeoman class. The idle, profligate, and disorderly elements which

entered into the making of Virginia had absolutely no place among them. Some of them belonged to the ancient landed gentry—men of the class of John Hampden or Oliver Cromwell, representing the soundest and finest English stock;* many of these were graduates of Cambridge, that great university even then Puritan in its sympathies. Prof. Tyler says that between 1630 and 1690 there were probably “as many graduates of Cambridge and Oxford in New England as could be found in any population of similar size in the mother-country.”† But it is not merely that they were scholarly men; history shows them to have been men of endurance and of courage. Their grand purpose of building in the wilderness a State which should rest on the foundations of religion and morality was one likely to attract only the higher and stancher characters. No wonder that one of their early preachers declared that “God sifted a whole nation that he might send choice grain over into this wilderness.”

The character and scholarship of its founders made New England the most intellectual of all the Colonies; it left a lasting impress, not on New England only, but on many a future State in the then unexplored West, and on the life and thought of the mighty nation that was to be. It was in New England that popular education, the only foundation on which a

* “It is no unusual thing for a Massachusetts family to trace its pedigree to a lord of the manor in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.”—Fiske’s *American Political Ideas*, p. 29.

† Tyler’s *American Literature*, vol. i. p. 98.

republic such as ours can safely rest, was begun. After the Puritans had provided for the bare necessities of life, after they had built meeting-houses and "settled the civil government," "one of the next things" they "longed for and looked after was to advance learning and perpetuate it to posterity."* As early as 1642 parents were required to furnish their children with at least elementary instruction, and four years later every Colony except Rhode Island had made education compulsory. Certain autocratic spirits in Virginia sought to rest the government on the servile ignorance of the masses; the democratic spirit of New England found in popular enlightenment the true basis of a self-governed State. Even before the establishment of popular schools provision had been made for the higher education. Harvard College was founded in 1636, only sixteen years after the landing of the Mayflower; not, like the college of William and Mary, through the exertions of one man, but by the official action of the authorities. The beginning of this oldest of our colleges, built by the Puritan out of his penury, and set down in the clearing of a wilderness which was not yet wrested from the Indian and the wild beast, is an extraordinary proof of foresight and of loftiness of aim. It showed a trust in the future which time has justified. The college thus founded became a power in the higher life of the little

* *New England's First Fruits*. Coll. Mass. Hist. Soc., vol. i, 1st series, 242.

cluster of New England Colonies, and, in later years, in that of the whole nation. It has brought forth great men, and helped to make the little village of Newtown,—rechristened Cambridge in memory of the great university, dear to the Puritan heart,—a center of the greatest literary movement the country has yet seen.*

Apart from this care for education, we find many stray indications of this intellectual quality of the Puritan mind. New England produced the first almanac printed in the Colonies (1639); a humble form of literature, indeed, yet one which in the hands of Benjamin Franklin was to become a characteristic and important medium of popular instruction. New England gave us the first English book printed in North America—the famous *Bay Psalm Book* of Weld and Eliot (1640); she gave us, too, in *The Boston News Letter* (begun 1704), the first, and for fifteen years the only, newspaper printed within the limits of the present United States.

Not only did the Puritans bring with them a decidedly intellectual bent; they found at least some of the conditions of New England life distinctly favorable to mental development. The keen, stimulating atmosphere quickened mind and body with a restless and nervous energy, changing the ruddy,

* “For place they fix their eye upon New-town, which, to tell their Posterity whence they came, is now named Cambridge.”—*Wonder-working Providence of Zion's Saviour in New England*, by Capt. Edward Johnson, 1654. (Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature*, vol. i. p. 326.)

bulky Englishman into the alert, wiry, quicker-witted Yankee. There was here no luxurious abundance, such as that which in the South fostered a life of indolence. An early New England writer says truly that their company of the elect had not been led into a land flowing with milk and honey, but into a wilderness, where bare living could only be wrung from the stony earth by toil. There was nothing to encourage an almost purely agricultural society, such as that of Virginia; men must live by their brains, and so we note the early beginning of manufacturing and other industries at a time when they were unknown in the fertile Colonies of the South. Though dwelling in a country of splendid forests, the Virginian imported his chairs, tables, boxes, even his wooden bowls, from England;* in the North every man was a mechanic, and his necessity was the mother of Yankee ingenuity. There was more social intercourse in New England than in the huge and comparatively isolated plantations of the South. Town life was pronounced from the first, and half a century after the settlement at Plymouth there were fifty towns in a population of about eight thousand. The country was early divided into small districts, or townships, governed by the town-meeting, at which every male resident was expected to be present. By this system of free discussion the men of New England were not only training themselves in democratic methods of government, but they were developing

* See Beverly on the *Present State of Virginia*, p. 58.

their power to think, and to clothe their thoughts in effective words. Thus climate combined with certain political and social conditions to quicken and develop the New England mind.

But while the tone of New England was conspicuously intellectual, and while conditions favorable to

the encouragement of the intellect were by
Religion. no means lacking, the whole mental life

was cramped by an almost complete devotion to questions of theology and points of doctrine. An offence against their accepted religious system was an offence against the State, for the Church and the State were one. The ministers were consequently not mere spiritual guides, but leaders in temporal affairs; no man was permitted to vote unless he were a member of one of the congregations. These founders of a new England had got into a corner of the world, and "with immense toyle and charge made a wilderness habitable," that they might live unmolested in the practice of their faith, and not unnaturally they refused to admit those who differed from them in that faith. They were as intolerant as they were earnest and sincere, for intolerance was the bulwark of their whole system of government. The higher education, designed almost exclusively to prepare young men for the ministry, that "there might be some comfortable supply and succession," was narrowed by a too predominantly theological tone. Hence, as Matthew Arnold has said, "Harvard was calculated in its early days to produce learned theologians rather than men of letters." Thus, with an inspiring if mistaken

thoroughness and vigor, the Puritan undertook to subject life and thought in New England to a minute supervision and an iron rule; society was under a code which suppressed extravagance, or what was deemed affectation, in dress, and which discouraged even innocent amusements. One Thomas Parker, a minister highly thought of for his learning and goodness, came down from his study to reprove some of his relatives who were laughing "very freely" in the room below. "Cousins," he said, "I wonder you can be so merry, unless you are sure of your salvation." * The authorities of Plymouth threatened to banish a young servant-girl as a "common vagabond" because she had smiled in church. In such a society political freedom was curiously linked to religious despotism. Moreover, the conditions of life in the New World tended to exaggerate certain defects of the Puritan character. The especial temptation of the Puritan was to carry his virtues to an excess, and, by the undue development of his strong and uncompromising qualities, become self-righteous, fanatical, uncharitable, and morbid. English Puritans of the highest type, like John Hampden and the accomplished Colonel Hutchinson, a lover of music and poetry, preserved a juster balance of nature, and succeeded in uniting strength, rectitude, and a true religious feeling with a most winning grace and charm. But a rigorous climate, the hardness, solitude, and perils of life in the new land, its bitter experiences of hunger,

* Mather's *Magnalia*, vol. i. p. 439.

death, and pestilence, were calculated to intensify rather than to soften the grimmer and sterner Puritan traits. These harsh experiences called out fortitude and determination, and left but little room for joyousness or ease. New generations, with no memories of the charm and beauty of England, grew up to replace the old; the mother land seemed far off. The monotony of life depressed them, and the shadows deepened. Held in the iron pressure of such surroundings, the powerful mind of the New Englander, like that of some mediæval schoolman, became narrowed by being too inflexibly confined to one set of ideas, and, intrenched in his own opinions, he drove from him those whose religious views were different from his own. Such conditions were highly unfavorable to the production of a true literature, or indeed of any form of art. English Puritanism gave the world one supremely great poet; but Milton passed his early years in the evening of a beauty-loving time—a time of mask and antique pageantry, when the sounds of feast and jollity yet lingered in the air. And so Milton added to the inexorable Puritan conscience and an uncompromising seriousness of aim the artist's love of beauty, color, grace, and joy,—a love which was partly an inheritance from the gorgeous Elizabethan age then passing away. Beauty, gladness, and the fulness of a comprehensive human sympathy—without these things art and literature are starved. So while in Old England Puritan literature was cut off by the restoration of Charles II., in Colonial New England it lived indeed, but lived

pinched and repressed by the lack of the generous and life-giving conditions without which it is hard for art to bloom.

Lowell has said that Massachusetts and Virginia "have been the two great distributing centres of the English race on this continent."*

Certainly they are the two most conspicuous representatives of two important and con-

The Middle Colonies.

trasted elements which, with others too often unduly slighted, have gone to make up the nation. But these other elements cannot be altogether passed over. Between the territories of the English Cavalier and the English Puritan stretched a line of settlements by no means wholly English, which in character as in position were midway between these two extremes. During the early half of the seventeenth century, while the English were establishing themselves in the South and North, this rich belt of middle country was being taken up by other nations. Holland, true to the Dutch instinct for commerce, and quick to perceive the opportunities for trade held out by the Western world, established trading-posts at the mouth of the Hudson and further up the river, thus gaining possession of the finest harbor on the Eastern coast. A Dutch West India company was established (1621) and explorations and settlements were made on Delaware Bay and farther inland. By 1637 the Dutch had a competitor in the Swedes, who started rival

* *New England Two Centuries Ago*. *Prose Works*, vol. ii p. 14, complete edition.

trading settlements, but gave way to the Dutch about twenty years later (1655). Finally, when a war broke out in Europe between England and Holland, the whole middle district passed at length into the hands of the English. Three distinct though kindred races had thus struggled for this middle region, and although it became English at last, foreign elements remained in its population which were not without lasting effects upon its character. We are better able to understand the character of New York city, and appreciate why it had less literary and intellectual influence in early times than Boston or Philadelphia, if we remember that it was founded as a purely business enterprise by a nation of traders, and that its origin, its wealth and its commercial advantages, have combined to give it an essentially mercantile spirit.

The origin and character of Pennsylvania was widely different. While there were early Dutch and Swedish settlements within the domain afterwards granted to Penn by Charles II., the real beginning of Pennsylvania was distinctly English. New York was the child of a Dutch trading company; Pennsylvania the offspring of a desire to institute a better social and religious order, a purpose less selfish and more liberal than that which actuated the Puritans themselves. William Penn, one of the noblest characters in the annals of American colonization, was a man of good birth and education, who had suffered much for his courage and independence in doing what he believed to be right. The founding of Pennsylvania was in his eyes a "holy experiment." It was not reared,

like the Colonies of New England, on a foundation of narrow exclusiveness; it was to be a refuge for the persecuted and oppressed of every sect. The colony rested not merely on a political but on a religious liberty, and so it welcomed Germans, Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and Huguenots, emigrants of many nations, often attached to strange and curious religious sects. If Massachusetts pointed the way in popular education, Pennsylvania and not New England stands as the pattern of the Republic of the future, that, uniting civil and religious liberty, was to open her arms to mankind. The Puritan built for those of his own faith alone: to him even political rights were determined by religious belief. Penn, with a wonderful humanity and an astonishing faith, founded "a free colony for all mankind."

The people in Pennsylvania were accordingly separated by innumerable differences in race, language, and creed. Some of the sects could boast of learned men, but on the whole this diversity was unfavorable to intellectual progress. There was but little general culture, yet we find Philadelphia making an early provision for education, and prominent from the first in science and scholarship. Like the Puritans, the Quakers had but little sympathy with literature or art from the purely æsthetic side, but they showed a marked fondness for natural science, and intellectual liberty was the very principle of their religion. A school was opened in Philadelphia in 1683, only a year after Penn's landing, and six years later a

Educational
and literary
conditions
in Pennsyl-
vania.

1684
 public school was established in which the classics were taught. A printing-press was set up there in 1686, only four years after the founding of the city, and an almanac published by the Philadelphia printer, William Bradford, in the year following. The settlers showed themselves even more prompt than the people of New England in providing for the things of the mind, and we can readily believe that "the early emigrants included in their numbers men of good education and high endowments." In New England, however, education was probably more widely spread over the country districts, while in Pennsylvania it was largely confined to Philadelphia itself.

When we pass in imagination through this line of straggling settlements along the Eastern edge of this unknown wilderness, we cannot but see that, by the very nature of the situation, any great and immediate success in literature was for them all but impossible. Not only had they the enormous labor of subduing a continent, of combating Indians, of organizing governments, a work which would absorb the best energies and tax the practical resources of the strongest race, but they had further to overcome obstacles perhaps even more formidable in their lack of educational and literary facilities, in their remoteness from the great centres of culture, and in their very cast of mind. The South was indolent and illiterate, and many among the better classes inclined to despise literature as a profession; New England was intellectual but narrow,

The Colo-
 nies in lit-
 erature.

and given over too exclusively to matters of theology; New York was mercantile, and its first inhabitants were men of a heavy and phlegmatic race which has made no great contribution to the world's literature; Pennsylvania as a State was behind New England in education, and while Philadelphia was, from the first, a centre of education and culture, its bent seemed rather scientific than purely literary. The Quaker and the Puritan were probably the two most powerful influences back of our educational and intellectual life in the Colonial times, and, while both were excellent, both were distinctly unliterary influences. Emotion and color, the breath of poetry and art, were alike distasteful to the Quaker, while to the New England Puritan, in his "stern precision, even the innocent sport of the fancy seemed a crime." *

*Macaulay's *History of England*, vol. i. chap. ii.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE IN THE COLONIES

THE beginnings of Colonial literature were what we should expect from such conditions as we have described in the foregoing chapter. In the seventeenth century literature had not yet become a recognized profession in England; what wonder, then, that in the wilds of America men could not give up their lives to letters, but that they wrote only with a directly practical purpose, and as a side interest in busy and stirring lives. The desire of men and of nations to hand down some record of themselves and their doings to those that come after is a deep and general human impulse, and is one of the earliest incentives to literary composition. The early explorers and colonists of America shared in this natural wish to make such a record of what they had seen and done. Consequently many of our earliest books were stories of adventures in the new land, with descriptions of its scenery, and of the strange appearance and customs of its savage people. These books belong to the same class as those which record the voyages of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, Martin Frobisher, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the other great sea-dogs of the Eliza-

bethan time. Then, too, people in England naturally felt the greatest curiosity about the far off regions in which their kindred had made a home. There was a yet more practical reason for writing books of this kind. The country wanted colonists, and these reports of it were often intended to encourage emigration, put forth very much as we should now issue a prospectus of Alaska or of some sparsely-settled region of the West.

THE LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH

American literature begins in the South, the earliest-settled region of our country, and among its first productions we find books of travel and adventure such as we have just described. It is a book of travel, CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH's *True Relation of such Occurrences and Accidents of Note as Hath Happened in Virginia* (1608), that has gained the reputation of being the first American book. Its claim to this distinction appears to be somewhat doubtful, as Smith returned to England after his exploits in this country and ended his days there. His accounts of American exploration and settlement, therefore, are strictly the books of an Englishman about America, with no more title to be called American literature than Professor Bryce's *American Commonwealth*. But, English or American, we cannot afford to pass over either these books or their author. The famous Captain John Smith was born in a Lincolnshire village in 1580, the very year Sir Francis Drake, the first Englishman to sail round the world, was welcomed

home from his famous voyage with great rejoicings. He opened his eyes on a world of gallant exploits and strange adventures in the far corners of the earth. England was ringing with the fame of her great navigators, and Smith, born almost in sight of the sea, tells us that even from his boyhood "his mind was set upon brave adventures." The roving spirit was so strong that when about thirteen he sold his satchel and books, and resolved to run away to sea. His father's death interrupted the execution of this plan; but about two years later he left home for a wandering life full of strange adventures in many lands. As we read of his fighting, his shipwrecks, his romantic rescues by "honorable and virtuous Ladies," he seems to us like some resplendent knight-errant, a hero of mediæval romance, actually alive in that brave sixteenth-century world. On a voyage to Italy he is thrown into the sea by "a rabble of Pilgrims of divers nations," who, "hourly cursing him" for a heretic, swear they will have no good weather so long as he is on board. In a war against the Turks, the ladies longing to see "some courtlike pastime," he successively overcomes three Turkish champions in single combat and cuts off their heads. Unfortunately our chief authority for Smith's life is the narrative of the hero himself, and many believe that his exploits lost nothing in the telling. Probably the childish vanity at times apparent in his writings may be partly due to a dreamy spirit which loved to surround his adventures with that romantic glamour in which his imagination delighted. An old English writer, Thomas

Fuller, tells us that in Smith's old age in London, when beset by poverty, he "efforted [strengthened] his spirits with the remembrance and relation of what he formerly had been and what he had done." * This is as natural as it is pathetic, and helps us to a better understanding of his character and his books. Nevertheless, Smith was no empty boaster, but shrewd and capable, a man for a crisis, and a born leader. The great part he took in American colonization belongs to history; our present interest is in the books in which he jotted down the story of his settlement of Virginia, and his subsequent exploration of New England. Smith was a prolific and, no doubt, a rapid writer; but, like Sir Walter Raleigh, he made authorship merely an incident in a life crowded with dangers and brave deeds. As we might expect, he is not a finished writer; but his books are graphic and entertaining, and full of the vigor and power of the man. If his love of "brave adventure" and the spirit of the artist made him occasionally draw upon his imagination to heighten the interest, at least some of his readers will be secretly thankful for the romance, and pardon the trifling lapses from truth.

The literature of the South during the Colonial era is just what the conditions of life would lead us to expect. There are few books, and fewer authors, and the work produced, while valuable to the historian or interesting to the curious student, shows no exceptional literary

Literature
of the
South.

* Fuller's *Worthies of England*, p. 180 (ed. 1662).

merit or original power. One of the most vigorous and graphic bits of prose is an account of the expedition to Virginia of Sir Thomas Gates, whose ship was wrecked on one of the Bermudas in 1610. The story is told by William Strachey, one of the company, and the description of the storm is supposed to have furnished some hints to Shakespeare in the composition of *The Tempest*. Small as is the amount of this Southern literature, the portion of it which can fairly be called American is smaller still. We can hardly claim books written during a short stay in America as a part of our literature, yet if such books are excluded from these early writings of the South but little remains. According to Prof. Tyler, there were only six authors in Virginia during the first twenty years of its settlement, "who yet live and deserve to live." But of these six we find that all but one returned to England after a brief residence. Nor is this all; this little group of foreign writers is followed by no strong indigenous growth, and from 1627 to the close of the century the history of Southern literature is but little more than a blank. There are only about eleven writers in the South before the Revolution, including the six already referred to, who hold a place, more or less formal, in literary history, and ten out of the eleven deal with the history of the country, or relate some personal adventures, often semi-historical in their character. Bacon's rebellion in 1675 against the autocratic Governor Berkeley is the occasion of some powerful verses by an unknown hand, but with this exception

the English poet George Sandys's *Translation of Ovid* (1621-6) is the only notable contribution to literature in the strictest sense. A high authority speaks of this translation as "the first monument of English poetry, of classical scholarship, and of deliberate literary art reared on these shores;"* but when we reflect that it was begun in England and published in London, and that our only claim to it arises from the fact that it was completed during the author's brief stay in Virginia, we can hardly regard it as in any true sense our own.

Looking, then, at this Southern Colonial literature as a whole, we cannot but feel that during this period the affluent and semi-feudal South, with its general illiteracy and its aristocratic denial of freedom of thought, had not begun to create a true and enduring literature.

THE LITERATURE OF NEW ENGLAND

The strongly marked personality of the Puritan is deeply impressed upon the literature of New England, giving it from the first a well-defined and distinctive character. The intense conviction of the reality of the spiritual and the unseen, present as a living force in man's daily life and entering into its smallest and most ordinary details, an inexorable conscience and the rigors of an exacting and often joyless creed, these things create the atmosphere which makes the literature of this great section a thing apart. We are impressed with the large number of books on religious

*Tyler's *American Literature*, vol. i. p. 55.

and theological topics. Besides these larger and more formal treatises, learned clergymen assail each other with tracts upon hotly-contested points of doctrine, and the air is "black with sermons." In such works we see the provincial branch of that English literature of theological treatise and pamphlet warfare to which Milton himself was a contributor. Thus, by putting three thousand miles of sea between himself and the fierce disputations that were being waged at home, the Puritan changed his skies, but not his mind.

Nor is it merely in works of a professedly religious nature that this especial note of the Puritan is heard: it recurs at intervals in those diaries and histories which were written in New England as in the other Colonies, and repeats itself with still greater distinctness in the stray bits of crude verse that were laboriously brought forth amid the chill and hardness of that sober-minded land.

The first—and as original authorities perhaps the most important—among the historical writings are those of WILLIAM BRADFORD (1588–1657),
 Histories and journals. the second governor of Plymouth. Brad-
 ford was sprung from the yeoman class in Yorkshire. From his boyhood he had showed a decidedly religious bent, and, having separated himself from the Church of England, he came to America on the Mayflower in 1620. He and his fellow-passenger EDWARD WINSLOW kept a journal which dates from the day on which they first saw the new land; but Bradford's more ambitious and important work is his *History of Plymouth*, in which he gives a full and

clearly written account of the planting and early history of that colony to 1649.

Side by side with Bradford, the early governor and historian of Plymouth, we may appropriately place JOHN WINTHROP (1588-1649), the governor and historian of the sister colony of Massachusetts Bay. Of good family, a student at Trinity College, Cambridge, the son of a lawyer, and himself bred to that profession, Winthrop is among those choice spirits of scholarly training and sterling manhood who were being lost to England and gained for America by the stringency of Laud and the tyranny and duplicity of Charles the First. His so-called *History of New England* is really an unpretentious journal, a record of every-day happenings, as well as of those momentous events in which he played so great a part. It describes the voyage to America, and gives us, in the form of a simple, personal narrative, much valuable knowledge of the progress of the settlement until 1649. Many a homely incident, as that of the cow that died at Plymouth from eating Indian corn, seems to us but the gossip of a day, yet, like the musty columns of an old newspaper, it helps to bring us closer to the past. In places the style has a genuine freshness and charm. "We had now fair sunshine weather, and so pleasant a sweet air as did much refresh us, and there came a smell off the shore like the smell of a garden."* In such a sentence we

* Winthrop's *History of New England*, vol. i. p. 23 (Savage's ed., 1825).

recognize that captivating turn of phrase which Stevenson, that great modern master of the prose of adventure, seems to have learned in part from the narrative of the old English navigators. Winthrop's pages furnish many evidences of that belief in the direct ordering of human affairs by a Higher Power to which we have already alluded. Two children are driven into the house by the wind in time to escape death from a fall of logs, which would have "crushed them, if the Lord in his special providence had not delivered them."* Two men, having lost their boat, are left upon an oyster-bank, and "although they might have waded out on either side," they are drowned. "This," Winthrop adds, "was an evident judgment of God upon them, for they were wicked persons."† The following account of the extraordinary action of a certain Mr. Glover and its tragical consequences is not free from an unconscious humor:

"One Mr. Glover of Dorchester, having laid sixty pounds of gunpowder in bags to dry in the end of his chimney, it took fire, and some went up the chimney; other of it filled the room and passed out at a door into another room, and blew up a gable end. A maid which was in the room . . . was scorched, and died soon after. A little child in the arms of another was scorched upon the face, but not killed. Two men were singed, but not much. Divers pieces [firearms]

* Winthrop's *History of New England*, vol. i. p. 100.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 126.

which lay charged in several places took fire and went off, but did no harm. *Another great providence was*, that two little children, being at the fire a little before, they went out to play (though it was a very cold day) and so were preserved." * Here and there some chance anecdote or allusion shows us how near and real religion and conscience were to the people's life. We are told of a boy of fourteen, who, although "a dutiful child," becomes "humbled and broken for his sins," so that he went "mourning and languishing daily." † A man who is not a church-member awakes at night with a cry, starts from his bed, and jumps out of the window into the snow and runs for miles. The next morning he is traced by his footprints, and those in search of him see by the marks in the snow that he has "kneeled down to prayer in divers places." About seven miles from home they come upon his dead body. ‡ Winthrop tells the story briefly and without comment, but the incident has in it a very melancholy and tragic power; it is full of meaning, and it suggests to our imagination much that is not directly told. The midnight call to the troubled conscience; the frantic flight through the winter's night; the strange, silent witnesses to those secret and awful wrestlings in the dark, —these things force home on us one side of New England life, in all its dark and forbidding reality. It was the brooding, morbid, but intensely ideal temper

* Winthrop's *History of New England*, vol. i. p. 212.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 126.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 214.

of this life that the genius of Nathaniel Hawthorne was to interpret in a generation to come.

We find the same spirit in regard to unseen and spiritual things in the more professedly religious books, but of course greatly intensified and less mixed with worldly affairs. A large part of the writing done in New England was the work of the ministers. We have already spoken of their importance in a community which strove to make the law of man coincide with the law of God. As authorized expounders of God's laws they were recognized leaders, and their opinions on political and social as well as on religious matters were regarded with extraordinary deference. As a class, they were incomparably the best trained and most scholarly men in the Colonies, and the incessant writing of sermons helped to give them an alarming facility in composition. Such circumstances combined to make the ministers of New England the nearest approach to a directly literary class.

Perhaps the best illustration of the commanding influence and importance of the ministry in New England is to be found in the famous scholars and preachers of the Mather family, who for four successive generations made the pulpit a throne of power. Through RICHARD MATHER (1596-1669), the first in this clerical succession, INCREASE MATHER (1639-1723), his famous son, and COTTON MATHER (1663-1728), his yet more famous grandson, this remarkable family was a growing power in New England life and thought for nearly a

The Mather
dynasty.

hundred years. The Mathers were men of fine presence, of iron constitutions, with tremendous wills, and a capacity for toil that carried them through lives of tireless intellectual labor. Enormous readers and prodigious writers, these three men must have produced in all between five and six hundred works, including tracts, sermons, and pamphlets, besides hundreds of pages of manuscript which remain yet unpublished. The strong family traits are repeated from one generation to another, growing weaker at last in SAMUEL MATHER (1706-1785), the son of Cotton, author and minister like the rest, and the last of the line. Richard Mather, driven by persecution to take refuge in New England in 1635, labored for half a century "as minister of the Church of God." The description given of him suggests dignity and power: "His voice was loud and big; and, uttered with a deliberate vehemency, it procured unto his ministry an awful and very taking majesty." * We are amazed at the tremendous vitality of these men; at their indefatigable energy. Increase Mather lived to the age of eighty-five, and was for more than sixty years "a laborious preacher of Christ." Besides the labors of his ministry, he was for nearly twenty years the acting or actual president of Harvard College, and was during four critical years the representative of Massachusetts to England. With all this he found time to write one hundred and sixty books and tracts, and to read innumerable books—more, probably, than

* Mather's *Magnalia*, vol. 1. p. 452.

any other American of his day. Like his father, he seems to have impressed men with the awe that the New England minister so often inspired. We are told that "he had an awful and reverend manner" in leading "the public addresses to God," and that his face as well as his words constrained devotion.* Cotton Mather won an even wider distinction than his father for his miscellaneous learning and literary productivity. If study could make a great man, it would have made a genius of Cotton Mather. He had the largest private library in the Colonies. He understood many languages, and some of his three hundred and eighty-two published works are written in French, in Spanish, and in Algonquin. For over forty years he occupied the pulpit in the North Church, Boston, at first as assistant to his father; he was elected Fellow of the Royal Society—a high honor for a colonist in those days, and became better known in Europe for his learning than any other American of his time. Notwithstanding all these successes, his life, when we come to know it more clearly, moves us to pity and regret rather than to admiration, for in spite of sincerely good intentions it exhibited those defects and mistakes which even in his lifetime New England was beginning to outgrow. He was a bright boy, from whom much had been expected. Heir to the prestige and influence of a distinguished family, crammed with Latin and theology from his precocious youth,

* *Annals of the American Pulpit*, vol. i. p. 158. (Funeral sermon on Increase Mather.)

surrounded during his early manhood with an 'atmosphere of deference and adulation, Mather's circumstances naturally tended to make him vain and overbearing. Besides this, he was a devourer of books rather than an original thinker or a man of practical judgment; his retentive memory was stored with a mass of curious and ill-digested learning, and the learned allusions with which his works are burdened, having often but a slight and fanciful connection with the subject in hand, give his writing an unwieldy and pedantic tone. There was a consuming earnestness in this singular character, with the asceticism of some religious enthusiast of the middle ages. At fourteen he began the systematic observance of fasts and vigils, a practice which he continued until late in life. It was his ambition to resemble a certain rabbi "whose face was black by reason of his fastings." It was his habit to make the most ordinary events the occasion of some spiritual lesson, both for his own benefit and also for the training of his family. "Two of my children," he writes, "have been newly scorched with gunpowder, wherein, though they have received a merciful deliverance, yet they undergo a smart that is considerable. I must improve this occasion to inculcate lessons of piety upon them, especially with relation to their danger of everlasting burnings."* Beginning life full of ambition and zeal, Mather's later years were embittered by disappointment and darkened by domestic sorrows. Both tradition and

* Peabody's *Life of Mather*, in Sparks' *American Biography*, vol. vi. p. 194.

inheritance bound him to a time when the clergy of New England had wielded a tremendous civil power, but it was his lot to live when this political power was fast slipping away. New and more liberal ideas began to prevail; many were beginning to hold that the right to vote should be less rigidly restricted to church-members. So Mather stood committed by all his life and training to be the champion of a system of ecclesiastical influence in State affairs, condemned by the natural laws of growth to pass away. Such a situation is not without pathos. Under strangely altered conditions, he fought over again Thomas à Becket's battle for a lost cause. Lacking, it seems to us, the help of a lovable and winning personality, many of Mather's conscientious attempts to assist others were met with coldness, and, as he complained, with ingratitude. The man himself, with his pathetic failures and mistakes, his asceticism, his omnivorous learning and narrowness of mind, has an interest for us quite apart from his books, for he is in many ways the most significant figure in the Colonial history of his time.

Mather was the last notable representative of a New England that was breaking up and changing in accordance with more liberal ideas; in his writings the traditions and ideals of that earlier New England survive. In his most famous book, the *Magnalia Christi Americana, or The Ecclesiastical History of New England* (1702), he points the young generation to those traditions which he thought it wholesome for them to remem-

Mather's
work.

ber, and those ideals from which he feared they were inclined to fall away.* He would recall a backsliding generation by praising the wondrous deeds of their fathers that begat them, by reminding them that the hand of God was as truly manifest in the planting of New England as in the departure of Abraham from Chaldea. "*Tantæ molis erat, pro CHRISTO condere gentem,*"—this motto, which confronts us from the title-page of the *Magnalia*, gives us the key to the spirit in which the history is told. The *Magnalia* is a huge, unwieldy work; it passes from historical narrative to brief biographies of the principal governors and divines of New England, and includes a review, in eight chapters, of many illustrious and wonderful providences, both of mercies and judgments. Its pages are as thickly strown with Latin quotations as a barren New England hillside with bowlders, and the author's learning is obtruded into the simplest thought. Even in this intricate and fantastic style, modelled chiefly after the quaint and

* "Mankind will pardon me . . . if, smitten with a just fear of inroaching and ill-bodied degeneracies, I shall use my modest endeavors to prevent the loss of a country so signalized for the profession of the purest Religion. . . . I shall count my country lost in the loss of the primitive principles and the primitive practices upon which it was first established; but certainly one good way to save that loss would be to do something, that the memory of the great things done for us by our God may not be lost, and that the story of the circumstances attending the foundation and formation of this country and of its preservation hitherto, may be impartially handed unto posterity."—*Magnalia*, Bk. I., Introd.

somewhat ungainly prose of certain seventeenth-century writers in England, Mather represented a fashion which his contemporaries had already abandoned.

As we see in the *Magnalia* the intense Puritan conviction that God was as truly ordering the destinies of men as in the days when the children of Israel were His chosen people, so in another famous book of Mather's, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (1692), we find an equally strong apprehension of the personal presence of the powers of evil. This invisible world came very close to him, and he saw in New England the battle-ground for its spiritual hosts. Mather believed that before the Puritans came the land had been the territory of the Devil, where he had "reigned without any control for many ages." The setting up of a kingdom of God within his kingdom had filled him with fury, and he had tried many ways to recover possession. "I believe," Mather wrote, "that never were more satanical devices used for the unsettling of any people under the sun, than what have been here employ'd for the extirpation of the vine which God has here planted."* Foiled in all the more indirect means, the Devil at length came in person with his hosts, and organized a conspiracy for recovering the land. Mather and many others believed that the evil powers had entered into many unhappy creatures, who had been induced to assist him in his plot. The belief in witchcraft was not peculiar to New England, but the brooding and fanatical intensity of the New

* *Wonders of the Invisible World*, Sect. I. § II.

England mind gave this dark superstition a peculiar power. We need not tell the story of the witch-trials at Salem—perhaps the most tragic episode in our early history: it is enough to say that Cotton Mather's influence and writings were largely responsible for this horrible delusion. To his excited fancy the devils swarmed in multitudes like the frogs in the plagues of Egypt,* and "Behold! sinners!" he exclaims, "the very devils are walking about our streets with lengthened chains, making a dreadful noise in our ears, and Brimstone, even without a metaphor, is making an hellish and horrid stench in our nostrils."† Painful as are Mather's works on this theme, they yet show us the depth and height of the Puritan nature, at home beyond the borders of the invisible and personifying with the definiteness of Dante's vision the eternal conflict in the souls of men. To the New England Puritan this eternal conflict was the great fact of the world; but he hated iniquity rather than loved mercy, and added to his intense hatred of sin an equally intense satisfaction in the punishment of the sinner. This last trait is strongly shown in that characteristic poem, once widely popular in New England, Michael Wigglesworth's *Day of Doom*.

Before considering this extraordinary work, we must speak briefly of early verse-writing in New England. We should
Poetry in
New Eng-
land.
wrong the Puritan if we failed to perceive that, with

* Mather's *Wonders of the Invisible World*.

† *Ibid.*

all his outward austerity and reserve, he had yet the stirrings of a deep poetic feeling latent within him. Living among the eternal questions of conscience, and near to the mysteries of the unseen, his life could not but nourish that spirituality and mysticism which has continued to characterize the literature of New England. But this pent-up poetry of the New Englander found no natural and spontaneous outflow in song. The untaught art by which the people of Scotland or England shaped and rounded song and ballad into a thing of beauty and power seemed to have no place in his composition. The minstrels of early New England were Puritan divines, who elaborated doggerel epitaphs, and produced the harshest and crudest versification of the Psalter. This version, commonly known as the *Bay Psalm Book* (1640), was in general use for many years among the New England churches. It is so exceedingly rough and labored that no one with an ear for poetry can read it without positive pain, yet it was the work of men who may be fairly said to represent the best New England scholarship of their time. Prominent in the undertaking were Richard Mather, sometime student at Oxford, and John Eliot, the Apostle of the Indians, who was a graduate of Cambridge. It seems incredible that such men should have been incapable of complying with the ordinary rules of verse-making had they chosen to do so, and in fact the chief cause of the roughness of their version was their determination to sacrifice poetry to the literal accuracy of their translation. They announce in their preface that they

have "attempted conciseness rather than elegance, fidelity rather than poetry"; and the declaration shows the strength and narrowness of the religious feeling in New England, and the comparative indifference to beauty and art. The idea that they were desecrating the Bible they revered by converting some of the noblest poetry of the world into childish doggerel had no place in their minds. The verses, accordingly, jostle along like a disorderly mob, instead of marching with the ordered step of an army. When we imagine ourselves within the chill rectangular interior of some Puritan meeting-house, and think of these verses given out line by line, and droned over, without instrumental accompaniment, to some well-worn tune; when we reflect that, sung in this fashion, they were immensely popular throughout New England until shortly before the outbreak of the Revolution,—the æsthetic limitations of Puritanism become more plain.* The memorial verses, usually on

*For general accounts of metrical versions of the Psalter, including the *Bay Psalm Book*, see articles on English Hymnology, The English Psalter, in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*. See also *The Ancient Psalmody and Hymnology of New England*, by Samuel E. Staples; Palfrey's *History of New England*, vol. v., note, pp. 221, 222. The musical deficiencies of early New England congregations should not be overlooked. It is said that "not more than ten different tunes were used in public worship for eighty or ninety years. Few congregations could sing more than five tunes." Coffin's *History of Newbury*, p. 185, quoted by Palfrey, vol. ii.; *History of New England*, vol. ii., note, p. 41. When the music improved, the poetry of the metrical versions improved also.

the death of some minister or governor, are chiefly remarkable for their frigid quaintness of expression and their lack of any saving grace of humor. Thus the pompous movement of some lines bewailing the death of Sir William Phips, one of the governors of Massachusetts Bay, is so suddenly interrupted as to bring us close to the ridiculous:

"Our Almanacks foretold a great eclipse;
This they foresaw not of our greater PHIPS."

The following promise is made to the shade of the departed governor:

"Now lest ungrateful brands we should incur,
Your salary we'll pay in tears, GREAT SIR."*

In some cases we come upon far-fetched comparisons, or "conceits," as they were called, such as were in favor with Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and other early seventeenth-century poets in England. Thus in some memorial verses we are told that John Cotton was—

"A living, breathing *Bible*; tables where
Both *Covenants*, at large, engraven were;
Gospel and *Law*, in's heart, had each its column;
His head an index to the sacred volume;
His very name a *title-page*; and next,
His life a *commentary* on the text.
O, what a monument of glorious worth,
When, in a *new edition*, he comes forth,
Without *erratas* may we think he'll be,
In *leaves* and *covers* of eternity."†

* Elegy upon the death of Sir William Phips. Mather's *Magnalia*, Bk. II.

† Lines on Cotton, by B. Woodbridge, in Mather's *Magnalia*, Bk. III.

This "mortuary muse," as Lowell calls it, was commonly invoked by those who looked upon the writing of poetry only as an incidental accomplishment, but there is one verse-writer of early New England who produced so large a bulk of verse as to leave us in no doubt of

Anne Bradstreet.

her devotion and constancy to her art. This was *ANNE BRADSTREET (1613-1672), commonly known as the "Tenth Muse," from the announcement of her advent in that capacity on the title-page of the London edition of her book of poems. Mrs. Bradstreet herself had no part in the assumption of this lofty title, and it is only right to remember that she constantly expresses the most humble opinion of her work. Mrs. Bradstreet occupied a position of importance in the colony, being the daughter of one governor, Thomas Bradley, and the wife of another. While she was not a poet in any high sense, Mrs. Bradstreet showed such a marked superiority to the verse-makers about her that she justly won a considerable local reputation. Indeed, the great Cotton Mather asserted that her verses would outlast the stateliest marble, and another writer declared that in reading them he was "sunk in a sea of bliss" and "weltering in delight." In these days she has few readers beside the critics, into whose hands she hoped her book would never come. Yet while our earliest woman poet was not a genius, her character and abilities excite both admiration and interest. Before leaving England, at the age of eighteen, she seems to have had the opportunity of gratifying her keen love of

She gave "The Tenth Muse"
the form of a book
Explicit Liber Primus
Modulations, and a manual

reading, and throughout all her life in the loneliness of the crude Western colony, though checked by continual ill-health, and interrupted by the incessant claims of her household duties, the love of learning did not die out within her, but she remained, in the face of every obstacle, a reader, a thinker, and, in her scanty leisure, a writer of prose and verse. To judge her fairly we must realize how distant she was from the great centers of civilization, and remember the many obstacles she had to overcome. Born when Shakespeare's career was just ending and Milton was still in his infancy, the strictness of her religion as well as the remoteness of her situation shut her out from much that was noblest and most inspiring in the literature of that golden time. Besides all this, she was a woman, and, as she writes,

"Obnoxious to each carping tongue,
Who says my hand a needle better fits,
A poet's pen all scorn I should thus wrong,
For such despite they cast on female wits."

Yet in the teeth of such discouragement Anne Bradstreet wrote the best verses produced in New England in her time. Her works show industry, careful reading, and a religious, thoughtful, and appreciative mind. Her longest, but by no means her best, poem is *The Four Monarchies*, a rhymed history of Assyria, Persia, Greece, and Rome, based on Sir Walter Raleigh's *History of the World*. In her poem on *The Four Elements*, Earth, Air, Fire, and Water dispute together as to which is the most im-

portant.* Another poem, the *Four Seasons*, which contains sundry practical and prosaic points about agriculture, seems a dim anticipation of Thomson's *Seasons*. Mrs. Bradstreet was a great admirer of Sylvester's translation of a French poem by Du Bartas called *Divine Weeks and Works*, a long, dull composition much read by the Puritans of that time. She was called by a contemporary "a right Du Bartas's girl," but such a master was not calculated to improve her literary taste. It is in her simple and less bookish verses that she is at her best. Her short poem *Contemplations*, in which really admirable descriptions of nature are mingled with the thoughts that they naturally suggest to her religious and meditative mind, has a genuine poetry in it, absent from her more laborious and less unaffected works. But, on the whole, we should honor and remember Anne Bradstreet, not so much for the intrinsic worth of what she wrote, as for her place in the progress of our history and culture. We must honor her because she was one of the first among us to devote herself seriously to poetry for its own sake, and because her writings and example exerted a salutary and refining influence on others.

In Mrs. Bradstreet's *Contemplations* we have one of the few expressions in poetry of the gentler and sweeter element in New England life, but in MICHAEL WIGGLESWORTH'S *Day of Doom*, hard, dogmatic, and

1631-1715.
*Curiously enough, this bears a strong similarity to an interlude by John Heywood (1506?-1565), the *Play of the Weather*.

inspired with a fierce religious zeal, the sterner and more familiar aspect of that life is manifested in all its crude and uncompromising severity. Wigglesworth's life and character seem to have little in common with his terrible utterances. Like so many New England writers, he was a clergyman, and, as far as we can judge, gentle and kindly. His health was delicate, but, in spite of his feeble body, he was full of a consuming energy in good works. Cotton Mather describes him in his old age as "a little, feeble shadow of a man, beyond seventy, preaching usually twice or thrice in the week, visiting and comforting the afflicted, and attending to the sick, not only in his own town, but also in all those of the vicinity." Perhaps his love and devotion made him feel all the more strongly the terrors of that Day of Judgment which his best-known poem describes. Its rough, doggerel verse is lurid with graphic and almost exultant descriptions of the eternal tortures of the wicked, a theme which had attracted the genius of one of the greatest poets and one of the greatest artists of the world. We may doubt whether Dante in his *Inferno* or Michael Angelo in his Last Judgment had a more intense belief in the awful reality of the scene they depicted than this obscure New England Puritan. All was real enough to Wigglesworth's imagination, but the immeasurable distance between his halting verses and the works of the great masters of whom we have spoken tells us how hard it was for the New England Puritan to master even the alphabet of the poet's art. Under

Michael
Wiggles-
worth.

Dante-
Doric

the blue Italian skies the very peasant-girls by the impulse of a poetic instinct could utter their loves and longings in song; even in mediæval Scotland the youths and maidens, dancing on the green at twilight, could sing the ballad some poet of the people had made; but in our land it has always been different, and in New England men could preach or act, but they could not sing. So poor Michael Wigglesworth strove to preach what it was in his heart to say, and struggled with his halting, unmanageable verses as best he could. He describes the Day of Judgment coming swiftly on a careless and pleasure-loving world, grown hardened in its sins. He tells of the futile pleas of the heathen, and how they are put to silence; of the infants who, not elected to be saved, are yet assigned "the easiest room in hell." He preaches the everlasting physical torment of the wicked, who, like the condemned in Dante, have no hope of death.

"For day and night in their despight,
 Their torment's smoke ascendeth;
 Their pain and grief have no relief,
 Their anguish never endeth.

* * * * *

"They live to lie in misery,
 And bear eternal wo;
 And live they must while God is just,
 That He may plague them so." *

It is impossible for us to understand the spirit and motive of such a work unless we are in sympathy with

* *The Day of Doom*. Most of the poem is given in Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature*, vol. ii.

those doctrines in which Wigglesworth believed. But we must remember that such views were preached Sunday after Sunday from hundreds of pulpits. Because they were generally accepted, *The Day of Doom* became, as Lowell declared, the "solace of every fireside, the flicker of the pine-knots by which it was conned perhaps adding a livelier relish to its premonitions of eternal combustion."*

Wigglesworth was about thirty years older than Cotton Mather, but, like Mather, he saw about him signs of the breaking up of the more rigid religious rule of an earlier time, a waning power of the church, a growing tolerance which to him foreboded disaster to the Kingdom of Righteousness which the New England fathers had sacrificed so much to found. We see how sorely he felt these things in another poem, *God's Controversy with New England*, which was published in the same year as his *Day of Doom*. He treats in this less-known work of "New England planted, prospered, declining, threatened, punished." He describes his country, once reclaimed from the power of Satan, as slipping back into sin, and plagned and rebuked by God for its offences. If we would be just to Wigglesworth and others like him, we must remember that it is much easier for us to condemn his manner and intolerance than to understand the spirit of the time in which he lived and the motives which prompted his work. It seems likely that his conviction of the growing carelessness and wickedness of the time gave an added zest and fierceness to his picture

* *The Harvard Book*, vol. ii. p. 158.

of the eternal retribution. About him New England seemed, to his eyes, becoming faithless to her high calling, while in Old England the rule of the Puritan had recently been overturned, to give place to the profligate levity of the court of the second Charles. He had the almost fanatical intensity, the rigorous creed of his colony and his time; we can hardly wonder that, gentle and loving as he was, he taxed the slender resources of his uncouth verse with terrible warnings of the wrath that should suddenly overtake the children of disobedience.

We find the same strange contrast between the life and works of JONATHAN EDWARDS (1703-1758), by far the most acute, laborious, and distinguished thinker that Colonial New England produced.

Born in East Windsor, Connecticut, where his father was pastor, Edwards gave early promise of extraordinary mental power and of a deep spirituality of nature. The outward course of his life was not materially different from that of many of his brother ministers. Pure, laborious, lofty, and devoted, it was the life of the thinker and the student, full of high aims, if inclined to be morbidly conscientious, over-precise, and austere. Edwards was tall and slender, and, like Wigglesworth, of delicate constitution. His face—if we may judge from his portrait, with its high forehead, mild, meditative eyes, and almost womanly sweetness of expression—is that of the saint and scholar who has lived apart from the vulgar aims and contentions of ordinary men. He was subject to low spirits, but, with a wonderful

Jonathan
Edwards.

capacity for sustained intellectual exertion, he found the keenest pleasure in working out some intricate process of reasoning through long hours of solitary toil. Many elements of early New England life and thought meet in him: indeed, it is because he represents so perfectly the different aspects of that life that he seems full of contradictions which we find it hard or impossible to reconcile. He has to an extraordinary degree that high spirituality and beautiful serenity, that touch of true poetic sentiment, often buried out of sight or sternly repressed, which were among the noblest attributes of the Puritan temper. He has the old Hebraic joy in the presence of God; and he believes that "a divine, supernatural light is immediately imparted to the soul by God's Spirit." Even in his youth, while walking "for contemplation" in a solitary place in his father's pastures, his soul is filled with high and holy thought. "And as I was walking there," he writes, "and looking upon the sky and the clouds, there came into my mind so sweet a sense of the glorious majesty and grace of God as I know not how to express. . . . After this my sense of divine things gradually increased, and became more and more lively, and had more and more of that inward sweetness. The appearance of everything was altered; there seemed to be, as it were, a calm, sweet cast, an appearance of divine glory in almost everything; God's excellency, His wisdom, His purity and love seemed to appear in everything—in the sun, moon, and stars; in the clouds and the blue sky; in

*Phillis Wheatley, 1750-84, a
poor, negro girl, wrote clever
poetry on various subjects
Religious and general
published in London, (1773) which*

the grass, flowers, trees; in the water and all nature—which used greatly to fix my mind.”*

Through the quiet loveliness of this passage we feel that we are looking into the clear and tranquil depths of a transparently beautiful nature. The shy spirit of poetry is shown, too, in his description of Sarah Pierrepont, whom he afterwards married: “She will sometimes go about from place to place, singing sweetly; and seems to be always full of joy and pleasure; and no one knows for what. She loves to be alone, walking in the fields and groves, and seems to have some one invisible always conversing with her.”† Yet Edwards’s nature was steeped in that Calvinistic theology in which he had been reared—a creed which held that the mass of men were irretrievably doomed to everlasting and unspeakable agonies by what Edwards himself called the “revenging justice of God.” His famous sermon, *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God*, if possible more terrible and unsparing than its poetic counterpart, *The Day of Doom*, filled even a Puritan congregation with awe and trembling. Edwards loved to dwell on man’s inherent vileness and wickedness; he was accustomed to speak of his fellow-creatures, not as the children of God, but as loathsome worms and vipers. To the service of Calvinism Edwards brought logical powers of a high order, and an ideal and philosophic tempera-

* Stedman and Hutchinson’s *Library of American Literature*, vol. ii. p. 374.

† *Ibid.*, p. 382.

pleasant contrast, Boston, and Boston
the principal literary achievement
of the colored races in America.

ment, so that he seems to us both the sectarian controversialist and the metaphysician. This is the case in his most famous work, his essay *On the Freedom of the Will*, which won for him a high place among the leading minds of the eighteenth century, and exerted a considerable influence, not only on American, but also on Scotch and English thought. To Edwards as a theologian the absolute freedom of the human will seemed incompatible with the supreme power or sovereignty of God as the moral ruler of the world, and in this essay he has put forth his splendid powers of argument to disprove the absolute freedom of our wills. Everything, he argues, has a cause, and we choose one thing in preference to another because we are led to do so by our strongest motive. The will, being determined by the strongest motive, is not free. While Edwards's conclusions are not now generally accepted, his book holds an honored place in the history of philosophy, and may be regarded as the first really great and permanent contribution of America to the thought of the world.

With Jonathan Edwards, the greatest exponent of its thought and character, we close our survey of the literature of Colonial New England. He represents both its strength and its weakness; its gloomy, inexorable creed, and its zeal for righteousness and passion for abstract thought. He is both the spiritual descendant of Cotton Mather and of Michael Wigglesworth, and the spiritual ancestor of Dr. Channing, the great leader of New England Unitarianism, and of Emerson, the thinker of later times. He

stands the inheritor of the old, which even in his day was passing, and the forerunner of new developments to come.

THE LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE COLONIES

In approaching the literature of the Middle Colonies we feel that we have passed out of the sombre shadows of Puritanism into a lighter if less stimulating region. We miss those strong incentives to learning,—the keen and enthusiastic interest in questions of theology, and the commanding position given to the ministers; yet literature, if less earnest, is also less sectarian, more polished, and more open to the influence of foreign models. Apart from this, we recognize a general similarity to a large class of writings already alluded to in the Colonies of New England and the South. In this midland belt, as elsewhere, there are books and pamphlets descriptive of the country, such as Daniel Denton's *Brief Description of New York* (1670), and Gabriel Thomas's *Historical and Geographical Account of the Province and County of Pennsylvania and West New Jersey* (1698); there are local histories and narratives of adventure, as that singularly touching and graphic account of his wanderings given by the Quaker Jonathan Dickenson in his *God's Protective Providence Man's Surest Help and Defence* (1696). A careful English student of the United States has pronounced Pennsylvania "the most remarkable of all the Colonies after the New England group"; and so far as the scattered begin-

nings of literature in this central section had any intellectual center, it is to be found in Pennsylvania's largest and most important city. Indeed, Philadelphia's progress in education and culture was relatively more rapid than that of New England, for while New England was first in these respects in actual time, the landing of the Pilgrims was about half a century earlier than that of Penn. Within a few years after the foundation of the city, Philadelphia could boast of scholars and scientists whose high attainments and broad culture had won them European distinction. Among them was JAMES LOGAN, who came with Penn in 1699, a man of generous scholarship and scientific tastes. Besides writing a number of Latin essays on scientific subjects, Logan translated Cato's *Distiches* (1735), and Cicero's *De Senectute* (1744), the former probably the first translation of a classic both made and published in America. Another man of learning was GEORGE KEITH, who came to Philadelphia in 1689, and who was spoken of by a contemporary English writer as "the most learned man in the Quaker sect, well-versed in the Oriental tongues and in philosophy and mathematics."* A remarkable group of men bears witness to the city's early preëminence in science. In JOHN BARTRAM (1699-1777) Pennsylvania produced a scientist that Linnæus, the great Swedish naturalist, pronounced "the greatest natural botanist in the world." Bartram made important contributions to his chosen science, and founded near Philadelphia

* Burnet's *History of My Own Times*, vol. ii. p. 248.

the first botanic garden in this country. DAVID RITTENHOUSE, the astronomer and mathematician, and THOMAS GODFREY, who invented the quadrant, were among the other Philadelphians of scientific distinction. Such men, with others of hardly less note, point to the presence in early Philadelphia of wide intellectual interests and solid acquirements.

In the field of pure literature the city cannot be said to have accomplished as much as in science, yet it produced a number of versifiers who wrote with smoothness and apparent ease.

Poetry in
Philadel-
phia.

Their work is almost entirely an imitation of the accepted English models, and shows but little original thought or spontaneous poetic feeling. In the early years of the eighteenth century Pope had brought the flowing and monotonous cadence of the heroic verse to a wonderful excellence. This verse was immensely popular, to the comparative neglect of other forms, and it possessed the additional attraction of being easily imitated.* As we glance over the fugitive verses scattered through the American magazines of the first half of the last century, we come upon many an obscure reproduction of the trick of Pope's manner, or, less often, of that of some other English master. The somewhat frigid but resounding odes of Dryden, Thomson's *Seasons*, Gray's *Elegy*, or the minor poems of Milton,—such have been the evident models for some obscure or nameless copyist.

* See Macaulay's remarks on this point in his *Essay on Addison*.

Of little or no value as poetry, these verses bear conclusive witness to the origin of much of our early American verse. Perhaps no English original can be held responsible for the discordant notes of *The Bay Psalm Book* or *The Day of Doom*, but as our verse becomes smoother and more finished it is evidently but a provincial echo, a following of the literary mode of London in a distant part of the English sovereign's domain. But if such a fact impresses us with our intellectual dependence on England,—and this, we must remember, was only natural under the existing conditions,—it should also lead us to reflect that some Americans, at least, were eagerly familiarizing themselves with the best English classic poets when demands on their time and energies in purely material directions were pressing and incessant. A good instance of the imitative qualities of this verse, as well as of the real appreciation and reading which it implied, is to be found in the Philadelphia poet THOMAS GODFREY (1736–1763), the son of the inventor of the quadrant, already mentioned. Godfrey seems to have had no direct educational advantages beyond “a common education in his mother tongue.” After leaving school he was apprenticed to a watchmaker, and in 1758 was engaged in the expedition against Fort Du Quesne, but, limited as were his opportunities, his interest and aspiration lay in the direction of painting and poetry. In 1758 he published a lyric in *The American Magazine*, and rapidly won his way in the public favor. He died of a fever contracted in the South, at the early age of

twenty-seven. If we consider the circumstances under which Godfrey wrote, and remember the general character of our Colonial verse, we cannot but be impressed with the surprisingly high average to which his poetry attains. His poems indeed have but little positive merit, for, like all imitative verse, they do little but remind us of some masterpiece. They are crude in places, and often distinctly juvenile, yet their place in the history of our literature makes them both interesting and important. The youthful efforts of this glazier's son and watchmaker's apprentice show an acquaintance with English poetry greatly in advance of that of the early rhymesters of New England. Here are pastorals after the style of Pope, lyrics which recall Wither and his contemporaries of the early seventeenth century, and an allegoric poem, *The Court of Fancy*, which is patterned on Chaucer's *Parliament of Fowles*. Some of the stanzas in Godfrey's *Court of Love*, while they recall the allegorical descriptions in Sackville, Spenser, or many of the earlier English poets, yet show genuine poetic power. Godfrey's chief claim to be remembered is generally thought to be his blank-verse tragedy of *The Prince of Parthia*, the first drama written in America. This follows the Shakespearean manner as closely as the author's powers will permit—so closely, indeed, that some passages are little more than paraphrases of *Julius Cæsar*, *Hamlet*, and other plays; yet it is not wanting in touches of poetic power.

On the whole, it may be said of this literature of the Middle Colonies, that while it has no such striking

and original figures as those of the great Puritan
 Culture in the Middle States and New Eng-
 land. commonwealth, it shows a greater polish,
 and a wider reading in purely literary
 directions. If it has no Cotton Mather
 or Jonathan Edwards, it has a better
 balanced and perhaps a wider culture than is to be
 found in the great Colonies of the North. Pre-
 disposed by religious toleration to a greater liberty
 of thought than the iron fetters of Puritanism
 allowed, the ideal State founded by Penn was open
 in its early years to the influence of the clever but
 sceptical and unemotional writings which during the
 later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries set
 the standard of English literary taste. This is the
 literature on which the provincial taste was largely
 formed; this is the literature that finds its exponent
 in Benjamin Franklin.

STUDY LIST

THE COLONIAL PERIOD

1. **History.**—A good knowledge of our Colonial history and life is almost indispensable to an intelligent study of Colonial Literature. A few books are suggested here: Palfrey's *History of New England*; Lodge's *English Colonies in America*; Fiske's *Beginnings of New England*, also his *Dutch and Quaker Colonies in America*, and *Old Virginia and Her Neighbors*; Lowell's essay on "New England Two Centuries Ago"; Cooke's *Virginia*, in American Commonwealths Series; Justin Winsor's *Narrative and Critical History of America*, vols. ii.-iv.; Thwaite's *The Colonies*, in Epochs of American History Series; *The Colonial Era*, in the same series, contains, in addition to an admirable his-

torical survey, a useful chapter on the Colonial literature; Parkman's series on *France and England in America* (in seven parts, published under separate titles). Also the histories of the United States of Bancroft and of Hildreth.

2. Literature.—The best and fullest account of our earlier literature is that given in Tyler's *History of American Literature during the Colonial Time* (2 vols.). For briefer treatment see the earlier chapters of the histories of American literature in the list of general reference books.

3. American Anthologies and Collections may be used with advantage in a preliminary study of this period; see, beside those mentioned among the general reference books (p. xiv.), Trent and Wells, *Colonial Prose and Poetry, 1607-1775*; and B. W. Cairns, *Selections from Early American Writers, 1607-1800*.

CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH, Life of, by Charles Dudley Warner (Holt and Co.); see also Henry Adams' *Historical Essays*.

JOHN WINTHROP, Life of, by J. H. Twichell, in *Makers of America Series*.

COTTON MATHER, Life of, by Barrett Wendell, in *Makers of America Series*. *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather*, by A. P. Marvin.

JONATHAN EDWARDS, Life of, by A. V. G. Allen. See also Holmes's Essay on "Edwards," in *Pages from an Old Volume of Life*. For the philosophy of Edwards, see G. P. Fisher's *Discussions in History and Theology*. For criticism of Winthrop and of Edwards, see Andrew McPhail's essays on "John Winthrop" and on "Jonathan Edwards," in *Essays in Puritanism*.

ANNE BRADSTREET. See *Anne Bradstreet and Her Time*, by Helen Campbell.

PART II

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONALITY

Cir. 1765–Cir. 1815

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS OF NATIONALITY

THE prominent feature of our literature, during the period just sketched, was its lack of unity. The Colonies, distinct in origin and in character, had a spirit of local loyalty and pride, but no feeling of a common nationality. De ^{Colonial diversity.} Kalm, a Swedish naturalist who visited this country as late as 1748, commenting upon this independence of the several colonies, remarks that “each has its proper laws and coin, and may be looked upon in several lights as a State by itself.”* Besides all other causes for this isolation of the colonies from each other, was the difficulty of communication in a country so much of which still lay in unbroken forests. Under these conditions, each colony turned to England, rather than to its sister

* Peter De Kalm's *Travels into North America*, vol. i. pp. 262, 263.

settlements, for its material or intellectual supplies. Yet even from an early period conditions were slowly but steadily forcing the English in America to a closer union, and prompting them to a concerted

Progress towards union. action. Except towards the Atlantic, they found themselves hemmed in on every side by the encroachments of foreign rivals.

Florida and the South were in the hands of Spain, while on the far Northwest and West rose the aggressive and ambitious power of France, intent on pushing southward from the Great Lakes along the Mississippi valley. When the menace of France changed to actual conflict, it was but natural that the scattered English should draw closer together and attempt some concerted action against the common danger. Under all the local jealousies and differences between the English colonists was the uniting force of a common interest, the deep instinct of kinship, the bond of the one mother tongue. The great struggle with France for the mastery of the New World, begun in 1689 and continued intermittently for nearly three quarters of a century, thus constantly tended to compact the several Colonies. It was the outbreak of this war with France that brought about the first attempt at a Colonial Congress (1690); it was the renewal of this same war in 1754 which induced Franklin to offer a plan for a permanent Colonial union.

The spirit of nationality fought its way slowly, indeed, against much stubborn and shortsighted local pride. The strength of this local spirit is shown by

the colonies' rejection of Franklin's scheme for union. Yet the sense of nationality gained ground, if only under the compulsion of war and necessity.

Hardly was France conquered and the English supremacy in North America assured before the colonies were involved in new dangers, which impelled them yet more powerfully towards union. In the past, each colony had been more or less closely bound to England. Virginia, in the early days, had been far more a part of Old England than of New. But before the outbreak of the Revolution, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, and Virginia—North, Midland, and South; Puritan, Quaker, and Cavalier—were stirred to protest by the same indignation against the unjust exactions of the English Government. When James Otis, a Boston lawyer, argued in 1761 against writs of assistance,* and asked boldly "how far the Americans were bound to obey laws they had no share in making," he spoke not for Massachusetts only, but for the whole land. When, three years later, he published his pamphlet, *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved*, he wrote for the whole people. The impassioned eloquence of Patrick Henry expressed the answering sentiment of Virginia. Thus the South joined hands with the North, while the North, on its side, did not undervalue this bond of

* Writs of assistance were general search-warrants, in which the custom-house officer might insert what names he pleased. For report of Otis's argument, see *John Adams's Works*, edited by Chas. F. Adams, vol. ii., Appendix A; and *Life of James Otis*, by Wm. Tudor, Jr., chaps. v. and vi.

a common cause. Bernard, the governor of Massachusetts, declared that Henry's resolutions in the Virginia Assembly against the hated Stamp Act "rang the alarm-bell to the rest of America" (1765). We are told that during the general indignation aroused by this injudicious act, the people, instead of speaking of themselves as colonists, began to call themselves Americans. In the Middle Colonies, the *Farmer's Letters* (1767) of John Dickinson of Philadelphia echoed the patriotic protest of the South and North. So Massachusetts, Virginia, and Pennsylvania stood side by side. Richard Henry Lee, soon to be distinguished as the mover of a declaration of independence, thus summed up the situation: "They wish to make us dependent, but they will make us independent; *these oppressions will lead us to unite, and thus secure our liberty.*"

From about 1765, the year in which an American Congress met in New York to protest against the Stamp Act, the course of our history has been to gradually diminish local jealousies, and to unite separate and discordant elements into a single nation. The slow approaches to this result are matters of familiar history. The heroic struggle of the Revolution; the unsuccessful attempt to carry on the government as a loose confederation of States; the establishment of a truer nationality by the adoption of the Constitution (1787); the patriotic stimulus given by our second war for independence in 1812; the territorial expansion of the new nation; the continued strengthening of the power of the central

government,—all these familiar features of our history must be taken into account if we are to appreciate how our national literature was the natural outcome of our national life. Indeed, it may be said that our national life and our national literature were born together, and that the rising Americanism found vent simultaneously in men's deeds and words. From the opening of the Revolution to the close of the War of 1812, when our independence may be considered as having been permanently established, literature had its especial and important share in forwarding the attainment of that national life which the statesman and the soldier were laboring to secure. South and North the idea of country grew in men's minds, bringing with it a new and passionate patriotism. In the agitated controversies and generous ardor of the time, our literature first overstepped the limits of section, and a new era in our literary history began.

There is one man who stands out prominently in this era of consolidation. During the greater part of his life we were still a group of colonies; yet even then he labored to bring about a closer colonial union, and in his later years his work for the united nation was the crowning achievement of his long career. This man, Benjamin Franklin, is so important that we must consider him in a separate section.

Effect of
nationality
on litera-
ture.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (1706-1790)

Whether we approach him as philosopher, statesman, scientist, philanthropist, or man of letters, Benjamin Franklin impresses us at last not merely by what he did, but by what he was in himself. We feel his vigor, his originality of mind, his enormous practical ability, his singularly diversified talents, and we are impressed by the man himself as much as by his useful and wonderful career. Numberless pictures have made his shrewd but kindly face familiar to us. Washington wore the powdered wig and queue in vogue among gentlemen at that day, but in the portrait of Franklin the straight, thinnish, gray hair is brushed back from the high forehead and undisguised by wig or powder. We picture Franklin in his later years as a man of somewhat unwieldy carriage, sturdy, inclined to stoutness, and with slightly stooping shoulders, venerable and kind-hearted, but not easy to overreach in a bargain, and full of a humorous appreciation of the weaknesses of others. Even Washington is hardly so real and living to us as is this Philadelphia printer. In his humble origin, in the oft-told story of his rise, through his own push and industry, from the tallow-chandler's boy to the man honored in two continents and successful in a hundred varied enterprises, we are fond of seeing the great example of our national hero, the self-made man. It is said to be the highest merit of a democracy that it offers a free chance to all the men of ability in the

Franklin's
place in our
history.

community to turn their talents to good use, and Franklin showed us what a man could do for himself in a free country such as ours. "No one," writes a French critic, "began lower than the poor apprentice of Boston; no one raised himself higher, by his own energy, than the inventor of the lightning-rod; no one has rendered more splendid services to his country than the diplomatist who signed the peace of 1783 and secured the independence of the United States."*

Franklin occupies a large place in a momentous period of our national history. His career stretches over nearly the whole of that century in whose great events he bore so large a part. Born a loyal subject of Queen Anne, he died at eighty-four, when the Constitution of the United States had been adopted, and Washington had entered upon his first presidential term. In his early life he spent his energies for the English in the contest with the French; in his later years—the reigning sensation of Paris and the friend of Mirabeau—he labored for America against England as writer and as diplomatist through that "critical period" when our nation was born. Both in our literature and in our history he is thus identified with that period of consolidation at which we have now arrived.

Benjamin Franklin, the son of Josiah Franklin, a soap-boiler and tallow-chandler, was born in Boston, Jan. 17, 1706. On his father's side he sprang from

* *Mémoires de Franklin*, écrit par lui-même, traduis de l'Anglais et annotés par Edouard Laboulaye, de l'Institut de France. Paris, 1866.

a humble but sturdy stock, the Franklins having long had a small holding of land in Northamptonshire, England. The eldest son had followed the trade of a blacksmith for many generations, and the family had been distinguished by its early Protestantism and determined independence of thought. On his mother's side Franklin was descended from Peter Folger, one of the early New England settlers, whom Mather describes as "a learned and godly Englishman." Franklin was the youngest of a large family, and although he early showed a great capacity for study, his father was forced to take him from school at the age of ten and set him to work in the shop, cutting hides, filling candle-moulds, and running errands. But the boy's mind was active and inquiring; he disliked the work and found his resource in books. "From my infancy," he tells us in his *Autobiography*, "I was passionately fond of reading." Most of the handful of books owned by his father were works of theological controversy, congenial to the New England mind. Franklin read the greater part of them, but though the atmosphere and traditions of Puritan New England were all about him, the instinct of his mind and disposition led him to escape into a different air. Hard-headed and sceptical, Franklin, while born in that same New England that brought forth the devout and saintly mystic Jonathan Edwards, early showed his sympathy with opinions and standards of life and conduct then common in England, but totally opposed to the prevailing tone of his surroundings. It

is only by clearly understanding this, that we can understand the true significance of Franklin's character or of his work as a writer. Thus, although as a boy he had but very little to spend on books, and although but few of the contemporary English classics had then found their way to New England, it was the study of the leading English writers of the early eighteenth century, and not of Wigglesworth or Cotton Mather, that formed his literary style, helped to direct his thought and taste, and left a lasting impress upon his religious views. The first books he bought were the works of Bunyan, and in his *Autobiography* he speaks affectionately of Bunyan as "honest John," and calls him "my old favorite author."* One of the greatest living prose-writers of England during Franklin's youth was Joseph Addison, whose light and graceful style was for years the model of many English authors. Addison wrote a number of essays for *The Spectator* (1712-13), a periodical then very popular in England. A stray copy of *The Spectator* having fallen in Franklin's way, he "gave his days and nights to the study of Addison," and, to improve himself in writing, endeavored to reproduce the essays in his own words, correcting his work by a comparison with the original. But this English influence on Franklin went even deeper. Puritanism still controlled New England, but in the mother country its force had long been spent, and England was passing through a period of

* *Autobiography*, chap. i and chap. ii.

unbelief. The church was worldly and indifferent, the nation lacking in enthusiasm and living faith. It was an age of reason, not of feeling, and many prominent writers were attacking the foundations of belief. The works of two of these sceptical writers, Anthony Collins and Lord Shaftesbury, came in Franklin's way, and helped to unsettle his religious views. He was scarce fifteen when, after doubting on many points, he "began to doubt even of Revelation itself." * Thus both the literary style and the sceptical thought of the England of Queen Anne were a directing and controlling influence on his life and thought.

Meanwhile, Franklin had been apprenticed to his brother James, who was a printer. James published and edited a newspaper, *The New England Courant*, to which Benjamin, then about fifteen, became an anonymous contributor. Having quarrelled with his brother, a man of violent temper, Franklin came to Philadelphia, resolved to push his way unaided. Here he landed, a lad of seventeen, tired, hungry, and friendless, his whole stock of cash "a single dollar, and about a shilling in copper coin." But he had in himself the elements of success—health, youth, industry, business ability, and a shrewd eye to his own interests. The familiar story of his rise need not be retold here; we must note, however, that by a stay of some eighteen months in London, when Franklin was about eighteen, he was brought into

* *Autobiography.*

direct contact with that contemporary English life and thought which he had already known through the medium of books. While in London he wrote a pamphlet hostile to religion,—the publication of which he afterwards regretted,—and through it met some of the sceptical writers of the day. Among others, he was introduced to Bernard de Mandeville, the author of a cynical book called *The Fable of the Bees*, at a pale-ale house in Cheapside.

Franklin returned to Philadelphia in 1726, established himself as a printer, and in 1729 became the proprietor and publisher of a newspaper called *The Pennsylvania Gazette*. Shortly before this (1728) he had begun *The Busybody Papers*, a series of short, moral essays which are evidently the result of his early study of *The Spectator*. In these papers he comes before us, after the manner of Addison, as a censor of morals, and aims to hold up to ridicule certain follies of the time by exhibiting them in the person of some imaginary characters. The methods of Franklin's great model are closely imitated, but the personages are slightly sketched, conventional, and lifeless, and we miss the genial warmth and exquisite grace of the original.

From this time Franklin, by his public spirit, energy, attention to detail, and wonderful breadth of interest, became more and more a force in the community. He labored not only for his own generation, but for posterity. He established a debating club called the Junto, which developed into the American Philosophical Society, an organization of more than

national celebrity; he founded the Philadelphia Library, "the mother," as he says, "of all the North American subscription libraries;" he was instrumental in starting the University of Pennsylvania. Equally busy in other directions, he invented the open stove, still called by his name, and in his famous experiment with the kite he "called down the lightning from heaven." Made Postmaster-General in 1753, he greatly improved the postal system, and succeeded in making it not only efficient, but profitable. In 1757 Franklin was again in England, as commissioner from Pennsylvania, and this time remained for five years, meeting Hume and Robertson, the distinguished historians, and many other eminent persons. Franklin returned to England in 1765 as agent for Pennsylvania in matters relating to that province, but the relations between Great Britain and the Colonies were growing difficult and alarming, and his mission grew to one of a wider character.

In 1776, after a short stay in America, Franklin was sent to France as Ambassador of the United States, where he won social as well as political successes which are among the most striking incidents of his wonderful career. In the midst of the airy gallantries of the French court, or all the strange life of old-world Paris, Franklin, with his shaggy cap of marten's fur, his simple dress, his homely wit, moved in his unadorned and solid manhood, the representative, even to many of the Parisians, of a better order of things.

After performing the most signal public services,

Franklin, old, ill, and weary, returned to Philadelphia in 1785. Here he lingered for five years, loved and honored, still active in doing good, so far as his failing strength permitted, until the last. He died at the age of eighty-four, on the 17th of July, 1790.

Franklin was a voluminous and no doubt a rapid writer, as his collected works fill ten large volumes, but the incessant demands upon his time and energy left him little opportunity to devote himself to literature for its own sake. During his long and busy life his pen was seldom idle, but writing with him was usually but the means to an end, a convenient aid to the accomplishment of some definite project. Thus a large proportion of his published work consists of letters, in which, in his clear, business-like, and sensible way, he touches on many subjects,—science, inventions, books, and current politics,—and so unconsciously gives us a glimpse into his alert and eager mind. But work thus written for a specific purpose, while interesting historically, or for the knowledge it gives us of its author, naturally suffers from its temporary character, and can seldom take its place as pure literature.

Franklin as
a man of
letters.

Franklin's reputation as a writer rests mainly on his *Autobiography*, which has been called "the cornerstone of American Literature," his *Almanac*, and a few of his shorter pieces. *Poor Richard's Almanac* was one of Franklin's great business successes, and is probably the most famous example of the unambitious class of writing to which it belongs. It was begun in 1732, and continued for twenty-five years, soon

reaching a circulation, remarkable for those days, of ten thousand copies. In it Franklin speaks through the mouth of an imaginary character, "Poor Richard," or "Mr. Richard Saunders," who is supposed to be the compiler. "Poor Richard" represents himself as always star-gazing, and tells us that he went into the enterprise because his wife Bridget threatened to burn his books and instruments if he did not make some money by his learning. In the pages of his *Almanac* Franklin, under the guise of "Poor Richard," printed year after year those familiar proverbs, sometimes original and sometimes selected, which he apparently regarded as the best practical rules for the conduct of life. Through these homely sayings, so short as to be easily remembered, and so associated with some familiar experience that they reached the dullest intelligence, he preached his cardinal doctrine of industry and frugality as the way to wealth. Such writing may not be literature in the highest sense, but it shows us Franklin; for the rule of life which it advocates was that which the author had long followed, and the way to success which it pointed out was that by which Franklin's own success had been gained. Much as we must admire Franklin's admirable traits, we must admit that in some of the highest qualities he was distinctly wanting. The absence of these higher qualities is apparent in the *Almanac*, as it is in almost all that Franklin wrote. We see that with him success, and the laying up of treasures upon earth, if not precisely the same thing, are at least very close together. He tells us, indeed,

that his object is to make people virtuous, but assures us at the same time that the road to virtue lies through the making of money, "it being more difficult for a man in want to act honestly, than—to use one of those proverbs—it is 'for an empty sack to stand upright.' " He urges us to make money because, if we are prosperous, people will respect us:

"Now that I have a sheep and a cow,
Everybody bids me good-morrow."

He declares that "a ploughman on his legs is higher than a gentleman on his knees."

Franklin's object was simply to give some practical help to plain people, and in a limited sense his doctrines and advice are sound. But from the highest point of view, it must be admitted that the general tone of his teaching is mercenary and worldly. The exclusive devotion to money-making tends to the debasement of character; nor is the court which the vulgar pay to wealth a sufficient reason for concentrating one's energies on its acquisition. Moreover, if Franklin preached wealth as the way to virtue, he was not insensible to the advantages of virtue as a way to wealth. While the highest natures are transported with a passion for the beauty of holiness, Franklin has a tradesman's eye for its market value. "Nothing," he writes on the margin of his *Autobiography*, "nothing is so likely to make a man's fortune as virtue."

The *Autobiography* is Franklin's most important contribution to literature. It is unfinished, coming down only to 1757, the year of Franklin's second

visit to England. Written in the strong, clear, almost matter-of-fact style which was characteristic of the man, the book retains an indescribable freshness and fascination. Unlike many autobiographies, it has no posing for effect; it is the direct and simple record of a remarkable and wonderfully useful life. But it is even more than this. Few characters in the entire range of fiction are more memorable or more suggestive than that of Benjamin Franklin, and in the transparent prose of his *Autobiography* Franklin has half unconsciously given us a character-study which the greatest novelist or poet would find it hard to surpass. Certain faults or mistakes are quietly noted and regretted, but the pervading tone is one of complacent satisfaction, and a willingness is expressed "to go over the same life from its beginning to the end."

Franklin is often spoken of as a typical American, the representative of that utilitarian and money-making spirit supposed to be our leading national trait. A Scotch critic calls him Franklin's character. "the most practical of philosophers, in perhaps the most practical of nations"; Jefferson Davis sees in him the embodiment, not of the nation, but of New England, and sneers at him as "the incarnation of the peddling, tuppenny Yankee."* Both views are not only exaggerated and unjust: they are based upon a total misunderstanding of Franklin's real relation to his age. In his public career Franklin was a typical American patriot, rightly placed beside

* Quoted by G. W. Curtis in *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1868, p. 274.

Washington as one of the founders of the Republic; but in his character, his writings, his whole tone of mind and thought, he belonged not to America, but to the England of Shaftesbury, Addison, and Pope. In his scepticism, his cool common-sense, his scientific and intensely practical cast of mind, he is distinctly the child of Old England rather than of New. Franklin's unemotional, unideal temperament had absolutely nothing in common with the sombre fanaticism, the spirituality of the New England which shone through his great contemporary, Jonathan Edwards. Early affected by English books, and a resident for years in the great center of English life and thought, in his literary style as in his opinions he is an Englishman of the age of frigid poetry, shallow irreligion, and the glorification of good sense. In reading Franklin's works confirmations of the correctness of this view continually present themselves. Thus the tone and moral of the *Ephemera*, one of the best of his short pieces, in its allegorical picture of the infinite littleness and insignificance of mankind, are identical with the favorite attitude of Pope and Swift. Franklin, reaching here a higher elevation than he commonly attains, points to the little lives of men with the same contemptuous scorn as that manifest in *Gulliver's Travels* or veiled under the smooth phrases of the *Essay on Man*.

Thus Franklin, to be really understood, must be seen from many sides. Author of one of the first really notable American books, he stands both for our intellectual nearness to England and our political

severance from England. We are tempted to admire either too much or too little. If he was one of the least spiritual, he was one of the most incessantly and substantially useful of all great men, and while literature with him was but a side issue, he holds in our literary history a unique and by no means unimportant place.

STUDY LIST.

FRANKLIN

1. Franklin's chief claim to literary distinction rests upon his *Autobiography*. This has been edited by John Bigelow. There is a condensed edition in the Riverside Literature Series. This series also contains selections from the writings of Franklin, including *Poor Richard's Almanac*. The best edition of Franklin's works is *Writings of Benjamin Franklin*, edited with a life and introduction by A. H. Smyth, 10 vols.

2. Biography and Criticism.—See P. L. Ford's *The Franklin Bibliography*; Lives of, by James Parton; by J. B. McMaster, in American Men of Letters Series; by J. T. Morse, Jr., in American Statesmen Series. See also Sainte-Beuve's article on Franklin in *English Portraits*; and "Franklin" in Marble's *Heralds of American Literature*.

ORATORS OF THE REVOLUTION

As we should expect, the writings of this period of growing nationality are largely of a political and patriotic character. Much intellectual power was put into oratory, a form of literature of peculiar importance in a democracy, and one likely to be developed in the stress of action and controversy. Many of the speeches of these stirring days have been entirely lost

to us, and even the eloquence of such men as James Otis, Samuel Adams, and Patrick Henry is but little more than a tradition; yet some passages in the fragmentary reports of Henry's speeches are perhaps as familiar to us as any words written or spoken during the whole of this Revolutionary time. "Our chains are forged! Their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable, and let it come. . . . Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the cost of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take; but as for me, give me liberty or give me death."

The speeches of James Otis were likened by his contemporaries to "a flame of fire," and Richard Henry Lee was called "the American Cicero." Read to-day, without the orator's living power of voice and gesture, these snatches of Revolutionary eloquence seem stilted and overwrought. But it must be remembered that while we read them coldly and critically, when they were uttered a tremendous and uncertain issue hung over the speaker and his hearers, and that men's hearts were full of the daring and defiance of a great resolution.

The political literature of this period was by no means confined to these gusts of oratory. The national crisis produced numbers of political essays and pamphlets of a more sober and solid character, which make their main appeal to reason and discuss the nature and principles of government with great ability, clearness.

Other political literature.

and a philosophic breadth. This political writing, beginning during the years immediately preceding the Revolution and including the period of the adoption of the Constitution, shows us a new side of American literary ability. Hitherto the best intellect of the country, when it turned to writing at all, had largely occupied itself with intricate questions of theology, but, directed in a new course by the necessities of the hour, these political treatises and state papers demonstrated the American strength and capacity in the sphere of government. As Mr. Charles Dudley Warner says: "It is in the political writings immediately preceding and following the Revolution, such as those of Hamilton, Madison, Jay, Franklin, and Jefferson, that the new birth of a nation of original force and ideas is declared. It has been said, and I think the statement can be maintained, that for any parallel to those treatises on the nature of government, in respect to originality and vigor, we must go back to classic times."*

One of the most important examples of this order of writing is *The Federalist*, a series of eighty-four essays by Hamilton, Madison, and Jay.

The purpose of these essays, written after the close of the Revolution, while the States were loosely held together by Articles of Confederation, is to urge the establishment of a closer union by the adoption of the Constitution. They came out in a New York newspaper, and were first

The Federalist.

* *Life of Irving*, p. 10.

published in a connected form in 1788, the year before the Constitution became the fundamental law of the land. *The Federalist* is written in strong, pure English, and in the temperance of its tone and its range of historical illustrations it remains a monument to the learning and breadth of our early statesmen. Its inspiration is the great idea of a strong and united nation. The following passage may be cited as a good statement of its leading motive: "Let the thirteen States, bound together in one strict and indissoluble union, concur in creating one great American system, superior to the control of all Transatlantic force or influence, and able to dictate the terms of connection between the Old World and the New."*

THOMAS JEFFERSON (1743-1826) of Virginia, the third President of the United States, and the leader of the opposite political party to that of Hamilton, was another notable political Thomas
Jefferson. writer of the time. Jefferson was a man of considerable cultivation, with distinctly scholarly tastes and high aims. His views on popular liberty were more radical than those of his great contemporaries, for he had a fuller confidence in the ability of the people to exercise power with discretion. Unlike Hamilton and the Federalists, he believed in greatly restricting the power of the national government and correspondingly encouraging that of the several States, for he thought that by this means

* *The Federalist.*

greater freedom would be secured to the individual. The century in which Jefferson was born witnessed the outburst of the democratic spirit in the Old as well as in the New World, and Jefferson may properly be classed with certain European thinkers that helped on this movement.

Such writers as Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704) in England, and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) in France, had prepared the way for new and sometimes exaggerated views of human liberty and equality. We need not inquire how far Jefferson was influenced by these writers: it is enough to observe that, like them, his tendency was to regard questions of government and human rights from the broadly theoretical or philosophic, as well as from the practical, side. In this he stood apart from the great majority of the American revolutionists, whose resistance to England sprang rather from that instinct of freedom which is inbred in men of English blood than from any definite theories concerning the "rights of man." The New England farmer left his plough to confront the British soldiery at Lexington, but it was reserved for Jefferson, in the opening sentences of the Declaration of Independence, to justify the resistance of the Colonies on the broad foundation of natural and inalienable human rights. In the sonorous introduction to the Declaration, Jefferson puts aside for the time all the particular grievances which were the immediate causes of dispute, and goes back to political principles, which he holds are fundamental and universal. He sets

forth the rights of Americans, not under the British Constitution, but by the law of nature; he declares that governments are designed to secure men in these rights, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, and "that whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it."* This belief in the rights of man as man was not a new one with Jefferson when he wrote the Declaration. In some resolutions prepared by him in 1774 he had declared that Parliament had infringed upon both the natural and legal rights of the Americans, and in the same year, in a pamphlet entitled *A Summary View of the Rights of America*, he reiterated this opinion. It was this pamphlet, which took a most advanced ground in regard to the whole question of Colonial rights, that brought Jefferson to the front as one of the leading American political writers. It was widely read, not only in this country but in England, where it was republished in a modified form by the great statesman Edmund Burke. Jefferson's belief in liberty and his confidence in the masses showed themselves in more than one direction. A Virginian and a slaveholder, he was consistent and large-minded enough to champion the cause of the slave, and in an eloquent passage in his *Notes on Virginia*, after recording his protest against slavery, he goes on to prophesy the evil to come. The "liberties" which are the "gift of God" "are not to be violated

* Declaration of Independence.

but with His wrath." "Indeed," he adds,—“I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just: that His justice cannot sleep forever.”* The same confidence in and respect for man is shown in Jefferson's efforts in behalf of popular education. As in the case of his protest against slavery, this is the more praiseworthy when we remember the views that then commonly prevailed on this matter in Virginia and the South. No New Englander could write more earnestly and liberally than did this land-owner of the “Old Dominion.” “Preach, my dear sir, a crusade against ignorance; establish and improve the law for educating the common people. Let our countrymen know that the people alone can protect us against these evils, and that the tax which will be paid for this purpose is not more than the thousandth part of what will be paid to kings, priests, and nobles who will rise up among us if we leave the people in ignorance.”†

As Jefferson was not a speaker, he naturally relied most on writing as a means of influencing others and of diffusing his views. He was a prodigious letter-writer, some twenty-five thousand of his letters being still in existence, and these with his public documents and political tracts compose by far the greater part of his works. Besides these he wrote a few short essays of a more purely literary character, and the *Notes on*

* Works, Ford's ed., vol. iii. p. 267.

† Letter to Geo. Wythe, 1786. Works, Ford's ed., vol. iv. p. 269.

Virginia, a careful account of the physical features, laws, and general condition of his native State, which contains some passages of considerable literary merit. But, of course, Jefferson, like many of the other founders of the nation, was a statesman first and only secondarily a writer. He wrote his own epitaph; and we may infer from it those achievements of his life upon which he looked back with especial satisfaction at the last. In it he speaks of himself as "Author of the Declaration of American Independence, of the Statute of Virginia for religious freedom, and father of the University of Virginia." Freedom of action, freedom of conscience, and freedom of intellect; the spread of knowledge as the true basis of a State and as the best safeguard for the right exercise of liberty, —these things, in brief, seemed to Jefferson the end towards which the race should move; and it was by his work done in furtherance of these things that he chiefly desired to be remembered.

STUDY LIST

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONALITY

1. *Jefferson*.—Works edited by Paul Leicester Ford; *Life*, by James Schouler, in *Makers of America Series*, and by John T. Morse, Jr., in *American Statesmen Series*. See also, "Thomas Jefferson," in *Southern Statesmen of the Old Régime*, by W. P. Trent; *Political Opinions of Thomas Jefferson*, by J. W. Wayland; and "Thomas Jefferson the Conservative Reformer," in John Fiske's *Essays Historical and Literary*.

2. **The Federalist**, edited by Paul Leicester Ford. See also E. G. Bourne's *Essays in Historical Criticism*.

3. **History of the Period.**—Lives of Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, John Adams, Samuel Adams, and Patrick Henry, in *American Statesmen Series*; John Fiske's *American Revolution* (2 vols.), and *The Critical Period of American History*; McMaster's *History of the People of the United States*, vols. i.-iii.; A. B. Hart's *Formation of the Union*, in *Epochs of American History*; and F. A. Walker's *The Making of the Nation*, in *American History Series*.

CHAPTER II

POETRY AND ROMANCE

OUR struggle with and triumph over England, followed by the stimulating conviction that we had actually taken our place among the nations of the world, with a long vista of greatness opening before us, put a new and patriotic life into our poetry, as well as into our orations and political discussions. The period between the establishment of our independence and the close of the War of 1812 is memorable in European history as the epoch of the French Revolution and of the rise and downfall of Napoleon. Generous and impulsive spirits were aflame with wild notions of social change, of Liberty, Fraternity, and the "Rights of Man"; and many of these ideas, falling in as they did with our newly-asserted republicanism, heightened our patriotic enthusiasm and found an utterance in our literature. Before the dawn of our Revolution our attempts at poetry had been few in number and generally local in their character. The verse of this new era of our nationality was, at least, abundant in quantity, ambitious in design, and distended with a somewhat magnificent sense of the greatness of its theme. Viewed purely as poetry, the pompous and

The young
nation in
literature

monotonous epics, or crude, rough-hewn ballads of the time appeal but faintly to readers of to-day, but they claim attention as an important forward step in our national and literary growth. They reflected and furthered the sense that we were one people, born to a great destiny; and never, perhaps, at any period of our history has the pride of national greatness so dictated and dominated American Song. In New England TIMOTHY DWIGHT (1752-1817), JOEL BARLOW (1755-1812), and JOHN TRUMBULL (1750-1831), were the principal makers of this patriotic verse. In the Middle States it was represented by PHILIP FRENEAU (1752-1832), HUGH HENRY BRACKENRIDGE (1748-1816), and FRANCIS HOPKINSON (1737-1791), the latter chiefly remembered for his humorous ballad *The Battle of the Kegs*. There, too, JOSEPH HOPKINSON (1770-1842) wrote his *Hail Columbia*, first sung at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, in 1798. In the South, towards the close of the era, FRANCIS SCOTT KEY (1779-1843) composed our other national song, *The Star-Spangled Banner* (1814). Dwight and Barlow were both chaplains in the army during the Revolution, and were thus brought close to that making of the nation which gives their work its distinctive note. It would be wearisome to do more than allude to the work of this group of Revolutionary writers in the most general terms; but a clear understanding of its general character is neither uninteresting nor unimportant.

Three points are worth noting; the length and pre-
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 of it just about what the image
 In fact the youth of the time
 the height of the

yale
 president

Rise of
 poetry.

tensions of many of their poems; their recurrent note of patriotism, full of high hopes for the country's future, and often mingled with the current catch-words of social reform; and their timid imitation of the current English poetic forms. The mere titles of some of these patriotic poems are sufficient indications of their theme and spirit. Timothy Dwight, a grandson of Jonathan Edwards, and president of Yale College (1795), published a poem entitled *America* in 1772; Freneau and Brackenridge brought out a poem on *The Rising Glory of America* in the same year. Brackenridge's *Bunker's Hill* appeared in the year our independence was declared, and Joel Barlow's *Vision of Columbus* in 1785. Glancing through these poems, we can see how the new thought of the country's possibilities has wrought on the imagination of these authors. In Dwight's *Conquest of Canaan* (1785), a poem of epic proportion, Joshua is made to preach the "rights of man,"* and foretell the future prosperity of the Republic of the West. In that "blissful Eden" men shall

"Trace juster paths and choose their chiefs divine,
On Freedom's base erect the heavenly plan,
Teach laws to reign and save the Rights of Man."†

* This favorite phrase occurs in a modified form in Dwight's *Columbia*:

"Thy heroes the rights of mankind shall defend,
And triumph pursue them, and glory attend."

Also, more than once in Freneau's *America Independent* (1778) •

"If o'er mankind man gives you royal sway,
Take not the right of humankind away."

† *Conquest of Canaan*.

a sort of transformed "Hudibras"

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in which American freedom took the place of British freedom.

* Towards the end of John Trumbull's *McFingal*, a satirical poem dealing with the Revolution, and directed particularly against the Tory or English party, the poet declares, in a characteristically American passage, that there is room enough to put Britain into the middle of one of our great lakes, where Lord North standing on the margin would not be able to see land. England's day is declining, America's is to come. The poet sees in the future—

"Where now the panther guards his den,
Her desert forests swarm with men,
Her cities, towers, and columns rise,
And dazzling temples meet the skies;

* * * * *

Till to the skirts of Western day,
The peopled regions own her sway." *

Barlow's *Columbiad* (1807), an expansion of his already lengthy *Vision of Columbus*, designed to be the national epic, closed with a prayer for that "federation of the world" which Tennyson has pictured as the consummation of human history:

also made the mock heroic "Hasty

"Bid the last breath of dire contention cease,
And bind all regions in the leagues of peace;
Bid one great empire, with extensive sway,
Spread with the Sun, and bound the walls of day;
One centred system, one all-ruling soul,
Live through the parts and regulate the whole." †

Unreadable as most of these poems have become, with all their barren flats of mediocrity, they are

* *McFingal*, Canto IV.

† Barlow's *Columbiad*.

+ a promoter of the Revolution

often, as in the lines just quoted, noble in their ideals. To readers of that generation they stood for the new-born America, for the whole land with its boundless hopes and aspirations, the youthful conqueror of one of the proudest empires of the earth.

Realizing this, we see also that this new-fledged and aggressive Americanism did not and could not create, by a deliberate and conscious effort, a truly national body of poetry. National-
ity in lit-
erature. True nationality must exist before it can find a voice in literature, and true nationality is a thing of slow growth. The colonists were a provincial part of England; they had read English books, lived on English thought, formed their literary standards on a study of English classics: a declaration of independence was not an enchanter's wand to change this at a stroke. Consequently we find the poets of this period declaiming against Britain, and vaunting their independence of her, in verses which show by their careful conformity to English models our complete intellectual subjection to her. During the period of our Revolution many English versifiers, particularly those of inferior genius and originality, were still imitating Pope, the ease with which the monotonous rise and fall of Pope's manner could be reproduced adding, no doubt, to the number of his followers.* In manner,—that is, in the outward construction of their verses,—Dwight, Barlow, and many others, are simply Colonial followers of Pope, holding

* See what has been said on this point on p. 69, *supra*.

a similar position, except for the nature of their subject, to that occupied by such a versifier as Erasmus Darwin in England. Barlow, in particular, has caught Pope's very accent, as in the balanced distribution of his adjectives, one emphasizing each half of a line.* In his diction he often reminds us of Pope's contemporary, James Thomson. Trumbull's *McFingal* is an acknowledged imitation of Butler's *Hudibras*. Dwight's *Greenfield Hill* (1794), a less ambitious and more readable poem than his *Canaän*, contains imitations, or direct paraphrases, of Thomson, Goldsmith, Pope, and probably of Cowper, Dyer, and many other English poets of the eighteenth century.† The fact is worthy of notice, that the first considerable efforts at poetry among us were made at a time when the English poets naturally selected were not, in most cases, the best models for a young nation to imitate. The simple force and pathos of the ballad, the native music of the song, were almost replaced in the England of Pope by a style of poetry more artificial, less direct, full of conventionality, sterile in generous emotions, the utterance of a sophisticated age, and, as such,

* Cf. the following lines from the *Columbiad*, with some of the descriptions of nature in Pope's *Windsor Forest* :

"Beneath *tall* trees, in *livelier* verdure gay,
Long *level* walks a *humble* garb display;
The *infant* corn, unconscious of its worth,
Points the green spire and bends the foliage forth."

† Dwight says in his preface to this poem : "Originally the writer designed to imitate in the several parts the manner of as many British poets ; but, finding himself too much occupied to pursue the design, he relinquished it."

unsuited to guide the poetic attempts of a new civilization. *The Poet of the Revolution*

But in the midst of all this imitation, there was the hardly audible tone of a more genuine and distinct poetic voice. Philip Freneau, who turned out much doggerel and indifferent verse for the newspapers, reaches at times, in some lyric like his *Indian Burying Ground*, a level higher than that to which any of his more ambitious brethren attained. His best work is indeed small in quantity, and shines out from a mass of rubbish, but gems like the poem just mentioned, *The Wild Honeysuckle*, and *Eutaw Springs* may be said to hold a permanent place in our literature. Such poems bear the stamp of that originality which is one of the marks of a true poet, and they have an unmistakable grace and delicacy of touch. The English are commonly supposed to be slow to recognize American genius, but Thomas Moore expressed his admiration of Freneau, while Campbell, in *O'Connor's Child*, borrowed one of Freneau's finest lines, and Scott introduced another, but slightly changed, into *Marmion*. Freneau thus received striking proofs of appreciation from three of the greatest English poets of the day. Freneau was probably the earliest of our writers to recognize the Indian as a fit subject for romantic treatment, and in this respect he may be thought of as the forerunner of Cooper, Longfellow, and Simms. In Freneau, then, with all his haste and roughness, we note the slight but positive beginning of a true and higher order of poetry in America. *The Masterpiece*

"The House of the Future, the best poem written in America before 1800 appeared 1788."

Hard upon this outburst of patriotic poetry followed the powerful but morbid and fantastic romances of

**The begin-
ning of
romance.** CHARLES BROCKDEN BROWN (1771-1810),
the first American writer who devoted him-
self to literature as a profession. Brown

may fairly be considered our first romance-writer, although a few stories of very inferior merit had appeared before his work began. He was born in Philadelphia in 1771, and in that city, except for a brief stay in New York, his short life was spent. From his youth his health was delicate, and in a letter written towards the close of his life he declares that he had never known what it was to feel well for more than half an hour at a time. Like many delicate boys, he found his pleasure in poring over books and in the world of the imagination. Much of his time was spent in solitary country rambles. He began to study law, but abandoned a profession whose rigid and practical requirements must have been distasteful to one of his dreamy and romantic disposition. Although sprung from Quaker stock and brought up in the doctrines of that sect, Brown early yielded to the influence of the sceptical philosophy and extravagant social theories that were then dazzling so many ardent spirits. He was greatly attracted by the radical teachings of William Godwin, an English novelist and would-be social reformer, and of Godwin's wife, Mary Wollstonecraft. The strong effect of their influence both on Brown's views and on his literary style is apparent in his writings. The extreme theories advocated by Mrs. Godwin (Mary Wollstonecraft) on the position of women appear to

have prompted the composition of Brown's first published work, *Alcuin, a Dialogue on the Rights of Women*. A youthful romance, *Carsol*, in which he depicts a Utopian community, is suggestive of those visions of a new earth in which Godwin and his followers indulged. In his maturer romances Brown's style and principle of composition show so marked a resemblance to the works of the English novelist, that he is often spoken of as "the American disciple of Godwin." *Wieland, or The Transformation*, Brown's first published romance, appeared in 1798. The plot turns on the employment of ventriloquism by the villain of the story, with awful and tragical results. Horrible and improbable as the book is, it contains scenes of unquestionable power. Like much of Brown's work, it has about it a morbid and unwholesome atmosphere, attributable perhaps in part to ill-health, and in part to the fondness for creepy and ghostly subjects, which was a marked trait in the contemporary English school of romance. Brown's other romances, *Ormond*, *Arthur Mervyn*, *Edgar Huntly*, *Clara Howard*, and *Jane Talbot*, followed in rapid succession, all except the last appearing within three years after the publication of *Wieland*. On these books, hastily written as they must have been, his reputation chiefly rests.

We have alluded to the influence of Godwin on Brown, but we must remember further that the work of both men was more or less in keeping with the general character of romance-writing then popular. Both wrote before Walter Scott had at least partially

freed the romance from its stilted and unnatural diction, its crude horrors, and gross improbabilities, by his finer and saner art. Allowing for some personal peculiarities, it is to the gruesome and high-flown school of romance then uppermost—a school of which Mrs. Radcliffe is perhaps the most familiar exponent—that Brown belongs. On the other hand, he aimed to be American, and to a certain extent he succeeded. Like Barlow, Dwight, or Freneau, he chose American subjects. *Arthur Mervyn* is famous for its graphic descriptions of the ravages of the yellow-fever in Philadelphia in 1793; *Edgar Huntly*, the scene of which is laid in a then thinly-settled part of Pennsylvania, is full of vivid, if somewhat over-colored, descriptions of the solitudes of mountain and forest. We are taken, perhaps for the first time in fiction, into the midst of the perils of our frontier life; we encounter the panther and the Indian, the latter surrounded with none of Cooper's tinge of romance, but depicted as the mere wily and bloodthirsty savage. This choice of a native theme was a deliberate one, for Brown says in his preface that he is the first to call forth the reader's sympathy by substituting for puerile superstitions, Gothic castles, and chimeras,—the conventional machinery of the English romances,—“the incidents of Indian hostility and the perils of the Western wilderness.”* If in this story he distantly suggests Cooper, in his fondness for psychological problems, and in the morbid strain that runs

* Preface to *Edgar Huntly*.

through many of his books, he still more faintly fore-shadows Poe and the yet greater Hawthorne. As has been hinted, the faults of Brown's romances, their unreality, their affected sentiment, their improbability and the like, are often those of the school of writing to which he belonged. Another fault, the confused and inartistic way in which the plots are developed, is probably attributable to the rapidity with which they were composed. In spite of their shortcomings, they have very decided merits. The genuine narrative power in the man triumphs at times over all obstacles, as where Edgar Huntly, who has fallen into a cave while walking in his sleep, is described regaining consciousness in darkness and in total ignorance of his surroundings. Brown's romances were among the books that especially directed and fascinated the mind of that greater admirer of Godwin's, the young poet Shelley. When we consider Brown's models, his provincial surroundings, his continuous ill-health, his death at the early age of thirty-nine, and fairly estimate what he accomplished under these conditions, we may pronounce him one of our earliest men of genius in the sphere of literature.

Looking back upon the work of such men as Dwight, Freneau, and Brown, it is plain that the conditions which governed the production of poetry and of romance in this time were substantially the same. In both fields we were struggling to be American, and in both we were still more or less provincial in our subservience to the English mode. Our authors dealt

Poetry and
romance.

with American subjects, but to learn how to do so they kept their eyes fixed on the example set them by their English brethren. Yet a more original spirit was struggling to emancipate itself, and that spirit was present in the best of these poets, Philip Freneau, and, if to a less extent, in the first of the romancers, Charles Brockden Brown.

STUDY LIST

EARLY POETRY AND ROMANCE

1. **Literature.**—Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature*; Moore's *Songs and Ballads of the American Revolution*; Eggleston's *American War Ballads and Lyrics*; Stevenson's *Poems of American History*; Tyler's *American Literature*, his *Literary History of the American Revolution*, and his *Three Men of Letters* (Berkeley, Trumbull, and Barlow). See also Marble's *Heralds of American Literature* (1907), which includes essays on Hopkinson, Freneau, Trumbull, and Brown.

2. **Freneau.**—*Poems*. "The Wild Honeysuckle"; "To a Honey Bee"; "The Indian Burying-Ground"; "To the Memory of the Americans who Fell at Eutaw."

3. **Brown.**—See article on Brown in *Encyclopædia Britannica*, and Prescott's Essay published in his *Miscellanies*; see also Life in Sparks' *American Biography*. For Brown's connection with Shelley, and Godwin, see Dowden's *Life of Shelley*. Biographical and critical matter will also be found in M. S. Vilas' *Charles Brockden Brown*, a study of early American fiction; and in John Erskine's *Leading American Novelists*.

Play on words—
 Royall Tyler 1758-1826
 The Contrast
 H. M. Danlap 1766-1849
 The Fiddler - Andre
 John H. Grand Rapids 1793-1852
 60 1/2 days of...
 23rd... 6th...

PART III

THE LITERATURE OF THE REPUBLIC

Cir. 1809-1897

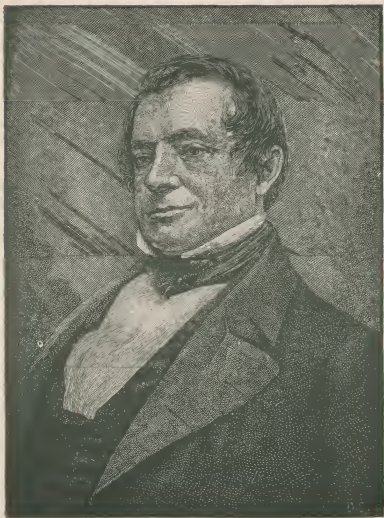
CHAPTER I

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE STATES, 1809-1835

MANY of the writers of the period last considered belong to the years of the Revolution, and to that unsettled interval immediately following, before our country was put in a surer and more established condition by the adoption of the Constitution (1787). At such a time, while there was much to arouse patriotism, there was much to awaken anxiety, and the poet had to look to the promise of the future from the midst of many difficulties and dangers that threatened the very life of the young State. But after the Constitution had placed the nation on a firmer basis by strengthening the hands of the central government, many of these dreams of the poet seemed in a fair way to be fulfilled. The need of a truer nationality had compacted the loosely confederated Colonies into a firm and indissoluble union. Three new States, Vermont,

The growth
of the re-
public.

Kentucky, and Tennessee, had been added to the original thirteen between the adoption of the Constitution and the close of the century. In 1803 Louisiana was purchased, and the United States asserted her power and dignity in a war with the Barbary pirates in defence of her growing commerce. In 1802 Ohio was admitted as a State. The rising republic again asserted herself in that contest with England, which has been called the Second War for Independence. This war greatly strengthened our national confidence and self-respect: it proved that the American Union was not an experiment, but an accomplished fact; and it was followed by a growth of patriotic pride and a deepening realization of the meaning of our national existence. At the close of the war the people were jubilant, and the country blazed with bonfires. In the first flush of patriotic enthusiasm our national song, *The Star-Spangled Banner*, was composed. While we were thus vindicating our national position abroad, the nation was still further extending its borders. Louisiana became a State in 1812, and in the years succeeding the second war with England the sturdy young republic was thrusting out her arms and gathering vast stretches of territory to herself. Between 1816 and 1821, Indiana, Mississippi, Illinois, Alabama, Maine, and Missouri were added to the Union,—six States within six years. The country's strength and greatness gained on the imagination, while the petty rivalries and jealousies, which were a remnant of the old Colonial exclusiveness, grew weaker, and the idea



WASHINGTON IRVING

of State sovereignty began to fade before the larger conception of a great Republic, whose dominion should stretch from sea to sea. This advance of the country in territory and importance was accompanied by a marked improvement in our literature, and that national spirit which had quickened our oratory and poetry to new life continued to exert an increasing influence. Indeed, it is not until this time that American literature can be fairly said to have taken a place among the literatures of the world. It is true that before this a few writers, such as Jonathan Edwards, Franklin, Freneau, and Brown, had produced notable works, which had made some impression on foreign readers; but on the whole it must be admitted that up to this time we had made but a slender addition to the great body of literature, and that at the opening of this century American books and their authors were commonly unknown or despised beyond the provincial limits of our own land. This was changed by the group of writers whose work we are now to consider: Washington Irving (1783-1859), James Fenimore Cooper (1789-1851), William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878), and their associates.

WASHINGTON IRVING (1783-1859).

Washington Irving is the first in point of time of our greater men of letters. We read his books to-day, not because they help us to understand a past stage in our mental life and growth; not merely because they were a force in broadening the thoughts and enlarg-

ing the sympathies of a past generation; but because they have the enduring interest that belongs to true literature, and so delight and amuse us as they did the readers of an earlier time. Irving is almost the first American writer of whom this can be truly said. We approach the works of nearly all the others that have been mentioned, as a task; we may find in them much that is curious, profitable, or entertaining; but on the whole we read them with a certain effort and lay them down with a sense of a duty done. But Irving is still so fresh, so living, so companionable, that in turning over the pages of his sketches or his histories, after toiling through the dusty volumes of his predecessors, we feel that we are at length among the first of the moderns, and that we have gained a more familiar ground. Chaucer is often spoken of as the "father of English poetry," although there were many English poets before him; and in some such way Irving, while he had many predecessors, may be thought of as the father of our American prose.

The man who thus stands at the threshold of the greater period of our literature was lovable and kindly, and his life was as beautiful and
Irving's life. as wholesome as his books. His father, William Irving, a Scotch sailor from the Orkney Islands, had married an English girl and settled in New York city. He entered into business there some years before the outbreak of the Revolution, and there Washington Irving, the youngest of eleven children, was born in 1783, the very year of the birth of our Republic. "Washington's work is ended,"

Irving's mother is reported to have said, "and the child shall be named after him." One anecdote of Irving's childhood impresses itself on our imagination. When he was barely out of petticoats, a Scotch servant of the family took him into a shop which Washington had just entered. "Please your honor," she said, pointing to her little charge, "here's a bairn was named after you." The President put his hand on the head of his little namesake and gave him his blessing. "The touch," says Mr. Charles Dudley Warner, "could not have been more efficacious, though it might have lingered longer, if he had known that he was propitiating his future biographer."* Irving's early surroundings seem far from favorable to the development of genius. New York was then a provincial town, inferior to either Philadelphia or Boston in size, importance, and culture. It had suffered severely from the British occupation during the Revolution, when nearly half the town had been burned. Dutch was still spoken, although the use of English was becoming more and more established; and the old Dutch life, which was to furnish Irving with material for some of his best work, still lingered in the town, and held its place yet more firmly in the scattered dwellings of the neighborhood. The commercial spirit ruled, education was backward, and there was but little literary or intellectual life. Irving's early opportunities for education appear to have been limited. He left school before he was sixteen. In

* Warner's *Life of Irving*, p. 23.

addition to the ordinary English branches he had learned some Latin,—his nearest approach to a classical education. But, like Mountjoy in one of his sketches, he was a reader and a dreamer. At ten he was stirred by a romantic Italian poem, read in translation; at eleven his boy's imagination was sent voyaging over seas by the adventures and travels of Robinson Crusoe and Sinbad the Sailor. He would linger about the pier heads and watch the "parting ships" with "longing eyes." His father had the strictness so common to the Scotch, and Irving would steal out secretly for a forbidden taste of the theatre, returning home at nine for family prayers. At sixteen he began to study law, but his health was delicate, and after he had taken several trips in this country in hopes of improving it, his family decided to send him to Europe, that he might have the benefit of the sea voyage. Europe has become so much nearer and more familiar to Americans in these days of rapid ocean-travel that we are likely to undervalue the influence on Irving's career of what was for those times an unusual experience.*

Before Irving, hardly one of our native-born writers had any knowledge of the older civilizations, except that which reached him through the imperfect medium of books or correspondence. Franklin and Jefferson are conspicuous exceptions; but for the most

* "So late as 1795, a gentleman who had been abroad was pointed out, even in the streets of the large cities, with the remark, 'There goes a man who has been to Europe.'"—McMaster's *History of the People of the United States*, vol. i. p. 51.

part our men of letters had never been beyond the limits of the comparatively crude surroundings and limited life of a new community. Irving had the natural susceptibility of the artist to beauty and romance; he was young, and his restricted life and quiet surroundings must have made the change to the wonders of France and Italy, the throngs of London and the delights of Paris, all the more impressive. He was abroad for two years—learning French, haunting picture-galleries, listening to music, meeting celebrities. He saw the great actors John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons; he saw the fleet of Nelson sweep by in search of the French, and a year later he saw the body of the dead admiral lying in state at Greenwich. Shortly after his return home in 1806, Irving made his first considerable attempts at writing. Together with his brother William and J. K. Paulding, who became a writer of some distinction, he conducted a fortnightly periodical called *Salmagundi*.* The paper, like Franklin's *Busybody*, was an open imitation of Addison's *Spectator*, long the accepted model for periodical writers; it has also points of resemblance to Goldsmith's *Citizen of the World*. Like the *Spectator*, the little paper aimed to ridicule the follies and reflect the passing life and fashions of the town; it was light, good-natured, and popular, and a creditable production for that time. Many of the sketches which Irving contributed to it were really

* *Salmagundi* is a dish composed of a variety of ingredients; hence a miscellany or collection of pieces of various kinds.

'prentice studies in subjects which he afterwards elaborated in his masterpieces, and this fact gives them more than a temporary interest. In the mean time Irving had completed his legal studies. He was good-looking, good-humored, and popular, and he entered into the social pleasures of Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Albany, as well as of his native city, with a youthful zest. He had thus a wider experience of American life than a writer would have been likely to gain under the more isolated conditions of the Colonial times. In the midst of this gay life a sorrow came to Irving, which he carried with him until his death. This was the death of Matilda Hoffman, whom he had loved with a beautiful and,

The "His- as he showed through his long life, with
tory of New an unchanging affection. When the blow
York." fell, Irving was engaged upon a humor-

ous *History of New York*. After he had recovered from the first shock of grief, he completed his work in hopes of finding some distraction from his trouble. The appearance of this book in 1809 is a landmark in our literature. It is more than the first masterpiece of American humor: it marks the appearance of our first great man of letters. Behind it stretch the long years of Colonial dulness; after it the path leads almost without a break to the writers of to-day. The *History of New York* is a serio-comic history of that city during the government of the Dutch. Like some of the greatest English satires, it is a burlesque on the heroic manner of the classic epics; but besides this, it is a parody on the

pedantry and long-windedness of a certain local historian. Scott declared that he had never found anything so closely resembling the manner of Dean Swift, the greatest and most merciless of English satirists. The comparison was a natural one, and intended to be a compliment; but we are nearer the truth if we admit that Irving had produced an essentially original book, good enough to stand alone, without hanging on to the skirt of any English classic. Certain passages, where the satire becomes more direct and pointed, as in the sarcastic justification of our treatment of the Indians, may remind us of the great English master; but the resemblance is slight and accidental. A large part of Irving's humor is a simple overflowing of fun; his great sense of the oddities and absurdities of his fellow creatures seems only to warm his heart to them the more. Where Swift is venomous, Irving is kindly; where Swift is profound, Irving skims lightly over the surface; his laughter is without malice, and his jests leave no wound. But the originality of the *History of New York* lies not only in the peculiar flavor of its humor. Perhaps the most wonderful thing about the book is the way in which the little Dutch settlement is made alive and real to our imagination. Irving lived in a land where the past seemed as plain and as ordinary as daylight; yet he had somehow contrived to invest the apparently commonplace annals of his native town with all the fascinations of an age of fable, and with the romantic coloring of a legendary time. Out of fragmentary and unpromising materials he had created, in a crude,

new country, a new world of the imagination. He may almost be said to have manufactured antiquity and forcibly attached it to New York. The *History* is the first book in which Irving takes us to this delightful region. We are in a world of ponderous Dutch burghers, fat and phlegmatic, slow-witted and oracular, where the most redoubtable achievements, in the golden age of Governor Wouter Van Twiller, were eating, sleeping, smoking, drinking, and saying nothing, and where the burgomasters were chosen by weight. The placid town of Manhattan rises before us, its wooden houses with their gable ends of yellow and black Dutch brick; its patriarchal burghers dozing in the sunshine or by the fireside over their eternal pipes; its bovine inhabitants unvexed by learning, or by those inequalities in intellect which are the occasion of emulation and strife. "There are two opposite ways," says Irving, "by which some men make a figure in the world: one by talking faster than they can think; and the other, by holding their tongues and not thinking at all." The last, we may infer, was the method of the governor and not a few of his subjects, in those days of tranquillity. To call such a world into being, endow it with a charm of its own, and relate its history with an unfailing and kindly humor, was to show one's self a literary artist. The *History of New York* was received with enthusiasm; but Irving did not immediately follow up his success. His family were in easy circumstances, so he was able to continue a pleasant social life so congenial to his kindly but observing temperament. He had an

interest in his brother's business, and in 1815 he left for England to look after the affairs of the firm. The enterprise was not prospering, and Irving devoted himself to its management with a faithfulness greatly to his credit.

In 1816 the firm failed, and Irving turned to literature for support. The first result of this definite choice of his career was *The Sketch-Book*, which appeared almost simultaneously in America and England. Ten years had passed since the publication of the *History of New York*, and we miss in *The Sketch-Book* the unrestrained and almost boisterous fun of its predecessor. On the other hand, its tone is gentler, more thoughtful, more refined, and suffused with that indescribable repose and charm so characteristic of its author's maturer work. It consists of sketches of various aspects of English and American life, sometimes in the form of a personal reminiscence, sometimes of a short story. The book belongs to that eighteenth-century school of essay-writing of which Addison is the great example; but, like the essays of Goldsmith or Lamb, Irving's sketches have a flavor of their own. His *Westminster Abbey* equals, if it does not surpass, Addison's famous essay on the same subject; and such sketches as the series on Christmas at Bracebridge Hall, or *The Country Church*, remind us of the days of Sir Roger de Coverley. Two of the best pieces in the book deal with American themes: *Rip Van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*. In them Irving returned

to that delineation of the Dutch life of New York which he had so happily begun, and actually gave to the banks of the Hudson that added charm of myth and legend almost unknown in our land. *The Sketch-Book* was a triumph, not only for Irving, but for American letters, and from this time Irving's place and career were substantially assured.

Irving now entered upon a long life of literary production, which we cannot here trace in detail. Contact with Spanish life, while attached to the American Legation at Madrid, Histories. turned his interest into a new channel, and resulted in his *Life of Columbus* (1828), a more solid and ambitious work than he had yet attempted, and in his *Companions of Columbus* and his *Conquest of Granada*. Another book inspired by this stay in Spain was the *Tales of the Alhambra* (1829), written after a residence in that old palace of the Moors. None of these Spanish studies is superior to the *Conquest of Granada* in an Old-world and romantic charm. Irving was not a deep thinker, nor, in a strict sense, a great scholar. He did not attempt to write history as a philosopher or as a scientific student of political or social conditions: he wrote it with the living delight of an artist, conscientious as to the accuracy of his facts, but moved by the dramatic and human interest of incident and character, and by the romantic fascination of his theme. Those who consider the dryness of a history a good test of its value, naturally look askance at Irving's richly-colored pictures of chivalric days; but his magical touch has

helped to recreate for us a chapter in the splendid past of Spain, and thousands have felt through him the gallantry and pathos of the last stand of the Moors, who, but for him, would have passed it by unheeding.

After spending a few years in England, during which he was given the honorary degree of D.C.L. by Oxford University, Irving returned to America in 1832. During the seventeen years of his absence the country had gone forward with astonishing rapidity. Thousands had poured westward from the Atlantic States, pushing the frontier of settlement farther and farther back into the wilderness. Wealth was increasing, and the introduction of the steamboat had given unsuspected facilities for transportation and intercourse. Irving explored the wonders of this new territory in a journey through the South and West, the results of which he later embodied in his *Tour of the Prairies* (1835).

Irving's disposition was affectionate and domestic. He had seen and learned much in his wanderings: he now longed to rest in a home of his own. He accordingly bought a small place on the banks of the Hudson near Tarrytown, close to the spot which his *Legend of Sleepy Hollow* had made famous. Here he established himself in a quaint Dutch cottage, built about a hundred years before by one of the Van Tassels. It was a "little, old-fashioned stone mansion, all made up of gable-ends." Among its attractions was a queer old weathercock which had been brought from Holland, and in time the walls

were covered with ivy grown from a slip that had come from Melrose Abbey. Irving called the place "Sunnyside," a name pleasantly in keeping with his sunshiny and almost boyish spirits. He reluctantly left his retreat in 1842 to go to Madrid as ambassador; but except for this period of enforced absence it is with "Sunnyside" that the remainder of his life is associated.

Although Irving was fifty when he retreated to his "roost," or rest, at "Sunnyside," he continued to write industriously and with but little intermission for the quarter of a century of life that yet remained to him. Among the most noteworthy of these later works are his *Life of Goldsmith*, and his final task, the *Life of Washington*. The first of these is one of the most perfect and enjoyable literary biographies in our language. It is based on a larger English work, and it does not profess to give us new information. Its charm lies rather in the kindly warmth of appreciation that pervades it, in its latent humor, and in the easy flow and beauty of its style. The shiftless but lovable Goldsmith has strong points of resemblance to Irving's greatest contribution to the characters of fiction—that most graceless, amiable, and lovable of vagabonds, Rip van Winkle. Such a subject was one to arouse Irving's sympathies and to call out his best powers.

To write a successful life of Washington demanded abilities of a widely different kind. The career of a great soldier, statesman, and patriot must be closely

related to large national issues; such a biography is part of a nation's history, and it demands the historian's largeness of view. Such a subject was less directly within the scope of Irving's peculiar genius. The book was in five large volumes, and appeared between 1855 and 1859. It was written towards the close of Irving's life, when he had less vigor than formerly to complete so large an undertaking, and he himself complained that the work dragged sadly towards the last. The book, if not the most characteristic of Irving's writings, is nevertheless well done. It is the result of careful research; it is simple and direct in style, quiet and well-balanced in tone, and it brings Washington before us with undeniable fairness and power. With the *Life of Washington*, Irving's work ended; he died at "Sunnyside" within a year after the final volume had been given to the public.

Irving's literary career covers an eventful half-century in our literary history. When he began to write, the literature of the imagination could hardly be said to exist among us, Irving's
Work. and the puritanic gloom which darkened so many of our productions was unrelieved by any kindly light of humor. In England, American books were almost universally despised or ignored. Before Irving laid down his pen, a second and yet abler group of writers had succeeded that to which he himself belonged; and our literature had at length won for itself a hearing and a respectable footing beyond the seas. Irving had no inconsiderable

part in bringing about this great change. He is commonly said to be the first writer to make our literature respected abroad. Thackeray called him "the first ambassador whom the New World of Letters sent to the Old," and added that he taught millions of his countrymen to love England. It was thus no small part of his work that he helped the two greatest English-speaking nations of the earth to understand and appreciate each other. As a writer, his literary sense was finer and more delicate, his art altogether on a higher plane than that of any American who preceded him. Irving's temperament was quickly responsive to his surroundings. He had a healthy enjoyment in the beauty of the world and the society of his fellow-creatures; he had a shrewd perception of that which lent itself to literary treatment; being touched alike by the odd or ludicrous, and by the quaint, romantic, and picturesque. Hence his writings are obviously inspired from without rather than from within, and his descriptions of Dutch, English, Spanish, and wild Western life are the reflections of his successive experiences. A great part of the fascination of Irving's writings is due to the fact that they are the expression of a singularly pure and lovely nature. The love he inspired in both England and America was due not merely to his writings, but to himself. Like Rip van Winkle, he was by nature something of a loiterer; he became a worker later from a manly sense of duty. But from both his character and works a certain masculine harshness and power, characteristic of sterner and stronger souls, are

notably absent. He draws us to him by a humor that is free from bitterness, by his unfeigned goodness, and by his love and sympathy for all mankind. He wrote modestly of his aims: "If I can now and then penetrate the gathering film of misanthropy, prompt a benevolent view of human nature, and make my reader more in good humor with his fellow-beings and with himself, surely—surely I shall not then have written entirely in vain."

STUDY LIST

IRVING

1. **Essays.**—"The Country Church," "Westminster Abbey," "Stratford-on-Avon," and the Christmas Series, in *The Sketch Book*; also the "Interior of the Alhambra" and "The Alhambra by Moonlight," in *The Alhambra*.

2. **Stories.**—"Rip Van Winkle," "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow," and "The Spectre Bridegroom," in *The Sketch Book*; "Dolph Heyliger" and "The Stout Gentleman," in *Bracebridge Hall*; "Wolfert Webber," in *Tales of a Traveller*. The stories of *The Alhambra* will be found delightfully suggestive of *The Arabian Nights*. Selections from *The Sketch Book* are published in the Riverside Literature Series. Putnams publish an annotated edition of *Tales of a Traveller*, *The Alhambra*, and *The Sketch Book*; *The Sketch Book* has also been edited by M. E. Litchfield, Ginn and Co.

3. **History, etc.**—*Life of Oliver Goldsmith*; *Conquest of Granada*.

4. **Biography and Criticism.**—Lives, by Pierre M. Irving; by D. J. Hill, in American Authors Series; and by C. D. Warner, in American Men of Letters Series. For criticisms,

see Whipple's *American Literature*; Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*; Howells' *My Literary Passions*; Lowell's *Fable for Critics*; Thackeray's "Nil Nisi Bonum," in *The Roundabout Papers*; *Studies of Irving* by C. D. Warner, Bryant, etc., and W. M. Payne's *Leading American Essayists*.

JAMES FENIMORE COOPER (1789-1851)

The quality of Irving's genius is another proof that American literature is, as a whole, but the continuation of English literature under new conditions. He works in an atmosphere of Old-world culture, and shows no trace of that largeness of design and crudeness of execution, of that unregulated power, which belong to the vigorous but undisciplined period of youth. His style, formed on the best English models, has that high finish and careful restraint characteristic of an ancient civilization. The subdued tone of much of his work may be compared to that of a mild and tranquil afternoon in autumn, when everything is suggestive of quiet, contemplation, fulfilment, and repose. His inspiration is from the past rather than from the future. Even in the midst of the eager rush of young America his first instinct is to turn to the life and legends of a time that has gone by.

With Cooper, on the other hand, Irving's fellow-worker in the building of a national literature, the case was almost precisely the reverse. While not free from foreign influences, Cooper is far more independent of them, and in his sympathy with a primitive life, his crudity of style, his lavish vigor, he



JAMES FENIMORE COOPER

represents, as Irving could not do, the stirring spirit of a young people. Cooper himself had the masculine, fighting temperament of the man of action. He lived a more stirring out-of-doors life than that which usually falls to the lot of men of letters, so that both by nature and experience he was fitted to be the novelist of incident and adventure.

James Fenimore Cooper was born in Burlington, New Jersey, a sleepy old town on the Delaware, in 1789. He was destined, however, to spend his early years in far different surroundings, for when he was only about a year old his father, who owned a large tract of land in a then unsettled region of New York near Otsego Lake, turned his back on civilization and settled there with his family. In his novel *The Pioneers* Cooper has given us a faithful picture of this region as he knew it in his childhood. It lay on the outer edge of settlement, and the axe had made but few clearings in the dense woods that shut in the lake. Westward stretched the solemn and almost unbroken wilderness. So remote was it, that a panic was at one time created in the little settlement by rumors of an Indian outbreak. Cooper was thus made familiar from childhood with the surroundings and incidents of border life, and his after-work bears witness to the depth and accuracy of these first impressions. And to a woodsman's knowledge of the woods he added a seaman's knowledge of the sea. Dismissed from Yale College for some boyish outbreak, it was decided that he should enter the navy. He accord-

Cooper's
life.

To vindicate himself from this charge Cooper wrote a second novel, *The Spy*, a story of our Revolution, which was published in 1821-22. In its way the publication of *The Spy* is almost as memorable an event in our literary history as the publication of Irving's *History of New York*. Cooper had found a subject congenial to his powers, and had begun to do for the American novel a work comparable to that of Irving in his especial sphere. The importance of the book was almost instantly recognized. A writer in the *North American Review* for 1822 declared that Cooper had "laid the foundations of American romance," and that he was the first who "deserved the appellation of a distinguished American novel-writer." He had proved, the same critic continued, that the novelist might find in American life a suitable and practically new field for his art. But the success of *The Spy* went far beyond the verdict of the critics, for Cooper at his best got directly at the large body of readers. In spite of our provincial deference to English opinion, America delighted in it without waiting for foreign sanction, and it was read with eager pleasure in England and France. The success of *The Spy* was not altogether due to the novelty of its subject. With many of Cooper's characteristic faults, it has also his characteristic merits. It is full of scenes that show the vigor and dash of his narrative power; and its central character, the humble pedler Harvey Birch, cool, brave, incorruptible, quick in resource in times of peril, is a noble example of that homely heroism in the portrayal of which Cooper excelled. Cooper's

ingly spent about a year on a merchant vessel as a common sailor, this being then the customary training for a naval career. After about three years in the navy he married, and, yielding to his wife's wishes, resigned his commission and returned to country life. His active disposition found an interest in farming. For ten years after his retirement from the navy he showed no inclination towards a literary career, and up to the age of thirty he had published nothing. Even then his sudden plunge into authorship was due to accident rather than to any literary or bookish tastes. Impressed with the shortcomings of a story of English life he had been reading, he said impulsively that he believed he could write a better story himself. His wife challenged him to prove it, and with little or no thought of publication he began a novel to justify his claim. He was encouraged to complete the venture, which appeared under the title *Precaution* in 1820. The scene was laid in England, probably because the original intention was to outdo an English novelist on his own ground. The book was published anonymously, and was popularly believed to be the work of an Englishman. It met with some favor, but chance had led Cooper into the drawing-room conversations of polite society, a region particularly unsuited to his powers, and he had no real knowledge of the upper-class English life which he attempted to describe. It is probable that Cooper would not have repeated his experiment had not some of his friends accused him of lack of patriotism in thus abandoning his own country for a foreign theme.

originality in choice of subjects was even more strongly shown by his next stories, *The Pioneers* and *The Pilot*, both of which appeared in 1823. The former is a story of the woods, the latter of the sea. Thus almost simultaneously Cooper showed himself master in two new spheres of fiction: in one of them he stands almost without a rival; while in the other, although he has had many followers, he has seldom, if ever, been excelled.

Cooper left home in 1826 for an extended stay in Europe. Several books were the direct outcome of his travels, but none of them rank with his best work, as, unlike Irving, all his truest inspiration came not from the Old World, but from the New. After his return to the United States in 1833 he engaged in a number of bitter and unfortunate controversies, which made him extremely unpopular for many years. An intense patriot, he found many things on his return to his own country which he thought should be amended. With the highest intentions, he was combative, devoid of tact, and both acutely sensitive to criticism himself and outspoken in his criticism of others. But unwise as he may have been in entering into these disputes, our strongest feeling is one of admiration for the unfaltering manliness, ability, and courage with which he contended almost single-handed against his detractors. During these years he wrote rapidly and incessantly, producing some of his best and some of his poorest books. In addition to many novels he published a careful and excellent *History of the United States Navy* (1839). He died

at Cooperstown in 1851, in the midst of those scenes of his boyhood which he had made famous.

The real greatness of Cooper as a romance-writer has been much obscured by his obvious faults and by the changes in literary taste. His style is full of defects, for he wrote rapidly, Cooper's
work. often carelessly, and he lacked literary training. He was successful only within certain limits, and frequently failed because he did not recognize his limitations, and, unlike his own *Pathfinder*, sought to go beyond his gifts. The lack of judgment, which often led him to attempt what he was unfitted to perform, has made his books of most unequal value, and the mixture of so much that is inferior tends to blind us to his genuine excellence.

While it would be absurd to ignore Cooper's faults readers of to-day seem to be much more in danger of forgetting his merits. His familiar title "the American Scott" is apt to make us undervalue his original power. His method indeed is naturally similar to that of the great master of modern romance, but it must not be forgotten that Cooper distinctly widened the sphere of romantic fiction by carrying it into new fields. Scott found his inspiration in feudalism; Cooper in the untamed freedom of the wilderness and the sea. Scott had predecessors in his delight in the Middle Ages, but Cooper wrote practically as a pioneer, and added a new domain to literature. Through him the hardy and adventurous life of our western frontier first took its place in fiction; he it was who made the crafts and cruelties of Indian

warfare, the obscure heroism of the backwoodsman, the interminable solitudes of the American forest, a reality in the imagination of Europe. Cooper's best and most comprehensive picture of border-life is of course to be found in his famous "Leatherstocking Tales," so called from one of the many names given to the hero. These books, *The Deerslayer* (1841), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Pathfinder* (1840), *The Pioneers* (1823), and *The Prairie* (1827), to name them in the order in which they should be read, are, taken together, Cooper's greatest contribution to literature. Cooper styled them "a drama in five acts:" it would probably be more accurate to call them a rough prose epic of the deeds of a New-World hero, nobler intrinsically than Achilles or Æneas. The stories show us this simple-hearted hunter and scout, Natty Bumppo or Leatherstocking, at five successive stages of his long and hazardous life. We see him on his first war-path, humble as one who has not been proved; we see him in the fulness of his marvellous skill and sagacity; and we see him finally when age has come upon him, his friends dead, his very dog feeble and toothless, his famous rifle, Killdeer, out-of-date, and ready, like its owner, to be laid aside. To thus show the life and development of a single character in five successive novels is a memorable achievement, and the success with which this has been accomplished is one of Cooper's highest claims to distinction. Pure-minded, simple-hearted, ignorant of books, but skilled in every sign of the forest; with a deep sense of religion, half primeval, half Christian,

with an aboriginal nearness to nature and an inveterate hatred of towns,—Leatherstocking has rightfully taken his place among the noblest and most original of the great characters of fiction. And Leatherstocking is more than interesting to us as an individual; like most of the great characters which the human imagination has created, he interests us partly for himself and partly because of what he represents. He is as distinctly a typical product of our border life as Rob Roy is of the forays of the Scottish Highlands or Achilles of the heroic age of Greece. He is a national hero: young as we are, he is ours. Living beyond the fringe of civilization and moving in front of the wave of settlement, his life is indirectly associated with that subduing of the West which is perhaps the most wonderful and heroic achievement of the American people. The greatness of this national movement, while it enters into the Leatherstocking stories only as a kind of secondary motive, yet gives to the whole a certain dimly recognized breadth and epic largeness of tone. In 1740–45, when in the *Deerslayer* its hero begins his career, Otsego Lake is yet unmapped by the king's surveyors; in the *Pioneers*, some sixty years later, the country about it has been taken up by the settlers, and the old hunter, compelled to retreat before them, grumbles that he loses himself in the clearings; finally, in *The Prairie*, which carries us to a period just after the Louisiana purchase of 1803, we are shown the emigrant train of the indefatigable settler pushing into the treeless plains of the far West. Leatherstocking's part in this

advance is not that of the settler but the pioneer; he even grumbles to find the settler following at his heels; yet, like Daniel Boone, he is a heroic figure in one of the heroic episodes of our history.

And as Cooper, in these and other stories, is the novelist of the American forest, so, in such a novel as *The Pilot*, he is as truly the novelist of the sea. Here, too, he is distinctly original in his choice of subject. The life of the sailor had indeed been incidentally introduced into English stories before his time: it entered into *Robinson Crusoe*, into the *Roderick Random* of Tobias Smollett, and shortly before Cooper wrote *The Pilot* Scott had touched on it in *The Pirate*, although with a landsman's ignorance of nautical affairs; but Cooper is admittedly the first writer of genuine sea-stories, and in this the creator of what was virtually a new order of fiction. In both of these great regions of his art, the woods and the sea, Cooper is remarkable for the truth and vividness of his descriptions of nature in her unconfined and uncontaminated beauty and power. He had lived with nature from a child, and if his descriptions of her lack literary finish, this is more than made up by that intense feeling of reality which his life-long understanding of her enabled him to convey. He is so true in this that he makes us live in the scenes he describes, for the smell of the woods is in them and the salty breath of the sea. Nor is Cooper to be despised as a painter of character. Of course his heroines are commonly but lay-figures for the development of his plots; of course he was incapable of presenting human

nature, and especially civilized human nature, in all its delicate shades of difference; but in one region he was supreme. It was his to show us the plain, unlettered man, with something of the primitive hero under his humble dress; and Harvey Birch, Pathfinder, or Long Tom Coffin, stands worthily beside those great kindred creations Adam Bede and Jeanie Deans.

The action of his stories often lags; as a rule, his plots are crudely constructed and improbable; but he rises to a crisis, and his dash and vigor in single scenes cannot well be surpassed. We find it hard to parallel the dramatic force and manly power of such descriptions as that of the wreck of the Ariel in *The Pilot*, the defence of the cave in *The Last of the Mohicans*, or the discovery of the body of Asa in *The Prairie*.

High-minded, robust, manly, such qualities fitted Cooper, full of faults and prejudices as he was, to be a truly national writer. He represented us in a way that even Irving could not, for through him the readers of Paris or London forgot for a time the spirit of the Old World to identify themselves with the spirit of the New.

STUDY LIST

COOPER

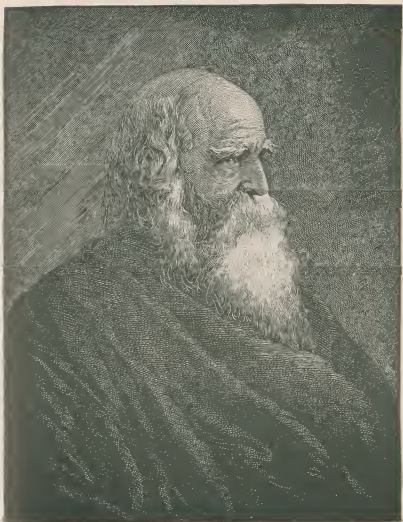
1. **Works.** Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales" are household works, and need no recommendation. In addition, *The Spy* and one or two of the "Sea Tales," such as *The Pilot* and *The Red Rover*, should be read. *The Last of the Mohicans*, edited, with Introduction and Notes, by Professor Richardson, is published in Longmans' English Classics.

2. **Biography and Criticism.**—Lounsbury's admirable *Life*, in the *American Men of Letters Series*. See also the introductions to the "*Leatherstocking Tales*" and the "*Sea Tales*," in the edition of Cooper's novels edited by his daughter, Susan Fenimore Cooper (Houghton, Mifflin & Co.). Considerable information is to be found in T. S. Livermore's *History of Cooperstown*. For criticism, see Bryant's *Discourse on Cooper*; Lowell's *Fable for Critics*; Thackeray's "On a Peal of Bells," in the *Roundabout Papers*; W. C. Brownell's *American Prose Masters*; and Erskine's *Leading American Novelists*. For an extreme criticism of Cooper, see "Fenimore Cooper's Literary Offences," in *How to Tell a Story*; and *other Essays*, by Mark Twain.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878)

American Modernists

Although a few creditable lyrics had been produced before his time, Bryant is the earliest of our greater poets, and fairly deserves his title "the Father of American Song." He stands with Irving and Cooper at the beginning of the modern period of our literature, holding somewhat the same relation to its poetry that Irving does to its prose. Bryant is associated with the group of writers commonly known as the "Knickerbocker School," which during the first quarter of the century made New York the literary center of the country. But while his career identifies him with New York, he belongs to New England by birth, inheritance, and early surroundings. He came of sound Puritan stock, his ancestors on both his father's and his mother's side having come over in the *Mayflower*. He was born at Cummington, a



WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

quiet town in western Massachusetts, in 1794, and grew up in the simple, hard-working, wholesome atmosphere characteristic of ^{Bryant's} ~~life.~~ New England a century ago. In his description of the neighborhood of Bryant's early home George William Curtis writes that "the very spirit of primitive New England brooded over the thinly-peopled hills and in the little villages and farms." * Drawn to nature by an instinctive sympathy and surrounded by her influence, the boy came to know her as a naturalist and to love her as a poet. He tells us that from his "earliest years" he was a "delighted observer of external nature." Two other influences, both of them characteristic of early New England, were about him from his youth—religion and books. He was brought up in the solemn if severe faith of his Puritan ancestors, and he was a reader, especially a reader of poetry, from his childhood. After a year at Williams College he studied law, but only to abandon it for literature, as Brockden Brown, Irving, and so many others had done before him. His literary tastes declared themselves very early. Shortly after he left college, when not yet eighteen, he wrote *Thanatopsis*, the noblest verse produced in America up to that time. When a law-student he was rebuked by his preceptor for reading Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads* instead of Blackstone's *Commentaries on the Laws of England*. He worked manfully at his profession, for it was not in him to shirk an obligation,

Thanatopsis is a Saxon and

* Commemoration address on Bryant in 1878.

*New England began
ethic rather than Christian.*

but his verses suggest to us the effort it cost him. Shortly after his admission to the bar in 1815 he wrote sadly that the bright vision which had once come to him in the silence of nature had faded in the atmosphere of the world. In 1817 *Thanatopsis* appeared in the *North American Review*, followed by another masterpiece, *To a Water-fowl*, in the year following. These contributions brought him at once into notice, and he was asked to write the annual poem for the *Phi Beta Kappa* Society at Harvard. This poem, *The Ages*, was published with several others in 1821, the year of the appearance of Irving's *Sketch-book* and Cooper's *Spy*.

After an honest effort to get on in his profession, Bryant came to New York and accepted the post of joint editor of the *New York Review and Athenæum Magazine* (1823). This periodical, a new venture, proved to be short-lived, and in 1826 Bryant became associate editor of *The Evening Post*. From this time journalism absorbed a large part of his time and energies. His connection with *The Evening Post* stretched over more than half a century, and through that long and critical period he did his work conscientiously and well. Living in the tumult of a great city, the sanctifying presence of nature was with him to the end. Through all the exacting duties of journalism he found rest and pleasure in turning from the discussions of the hour, or the heat of political controversy, to those influences of the woods and fields and open sky which had been his earliest inspiration. These seasons of escape and refreshment found from

time to time an expression in his verse and determined its prevailing tone. In *A Winter Piece* he alludes to that instinct which seems from the first to have sent him to the woods to be healed:

“When the ills of life
Had chafed my spirit, when the unsteady pulse
Beat with strange flutterings, I would wander forth
And seek the woods. . . .

While I stood
In Nature's loneliness, I was with one
With whom I early grew familiar,—one
Who never had a frown for me, whose voice
Never rebuked me for the hour I stole
From cares I loved not, but of which the world
Deems highest, to converse with her.”

As nearly all of Bryant's inspiration comes from the same source, his poetry is for the most part the utterance of a single mood. He did not develop or improve as a poet; from the first he is master of his especial style, and the spirit of his earliest verse is the spirit of his last.

Bryant became a prominent and dignified figure in the social and intellectual life of his adopted city. Various collections of his poems had appeared from time to time, and in 1870-71 he published a blank-verse translation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which has that nobility and dignity peculiar to his poetic manner. His long life extends over nearly the entire history of our strictly national literature. When he was born Franklin had only been dead four years, and Brockden Brown had not published his earliest romance; when he died in 1878, the work of Emerson,

Longfellow, and their great contemporaries was nearly ended, and a yet later generation, the writers of our own day, were pushing to the front. Before Bryant had finished his work, Irving and Cooper, the

Bryant's
work.

other members of that early triumvirate, had passed away. Bryant alone remained,

honored by his successors as the patri-

arch of our national literature. Bryant is not only the earliest of our greater poets: he stands alone in our literature by the individual tone and quality of his work, having absolutely no predecessors in America, and founding no school. *Thanatopsis* was not merely the greatest poem written in America up to the time of its appearance: it was totally distinct in manner and spirit from anything which we had heretofore produced. The poem has that classic severity, dignity, and noble seriousness for which so much of Bryant's best work is remarkable. Its theme is at once simple and comprehensive; the solemn fact of death, divested of those painful associations which make us tremble, stands out against the illimitable background of nature, as a part of the universal plan. There is no direct promise of immortality, but we are elevated and sustained by the contemplation of the unfailing natural processes of birth and decay. At the close the injunction to live worthily rings in our ears like a trumpet-call. There is nothing distinctly Christian in the poem, but in its high seriousness and in its uncompromising call to duty it is in keeping with the essential inner spirit of the English people from the

days of the Anglo-Saxon gleemen to those of Milton and of Browning. The verse has a majestic movement adapted to its solemn theme:

"The hills

Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun ; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;
The venerable woods ; rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green ; and, poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste,—
Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man."

Quite apart from its meaning, the sound of this verse, with its suggestions of Milton, of Shakespeare, or of Wordsworth, tells us that American poetry has reached a new stage in its development. The influence of Pope had ceased to be supreme in England some time before Bryant wrote *Thanatopsis*. During the latter half of the eighteenth century a new school of poets had asserted themselves, who discarded Pope's favorite metre, and wrote with a fresh inspiration of nature and of man. This movement against Pope and all that he represented culminated in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century in the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge. But while the English poets were rebelling against Pope the American verse-writers continued to imitate him, and Bryant is the first among us to show decidedly by his spirit and metre that he had cast him off. In a juvenile poem Bryant himself was one of Pope's many imitators, but he came under the spell of Words-

worth, and in *Thanatopsis* we see that the new spirit already dominant in England has at last reached us here. Thus Bryant's real predecessors are not American, but English. He is the spiritual descendant not of Dwight or Barlow, but of Milton, Cowper, and Wordsworth. But although from this aspect Bryant represents the English influence on our literature, he is both truly American and individual. A true poet can be affected by foreign influences without becoming a servile copyist. There is no reason to suppose that Bryant's delight in nature was less inborn than that of Wordsworth himself; nor can we doubt that while both Bryant and Cowper take sanctuary in nature from the turmoils of the streets, the impulse to do so was as genuine in the one case as in the other. This genuineness of Bryant's is shown in the truth of his natural descriptions. Nothing is borrowed from books or introduced for mere effect; he brings before us our country as he had known and loved it from a boy. He celebrates the yellow violet and the golden-rod, flowers that had never bloomed in English song. While Cooper was making our American landscape familiar through fiction, Bryant was giving it, for the first time, a place in poetry. Through his verse we enter the dimly lighted woods, with their familiar lessons of renewal and decay; we see the unsullied winter landscape of New England, the myriads of ice-crystals glittering in the sunlight; or we are carried in the wake of that great Western emigration to where the slopes of the prairies stretch in soft undulations under the drifting shadows of the clouds. Bryant

does more than describe such scenes: he is fond of drawing from them some solemn if familiar lesson; he clothes them with his own meditative and often sombre spirit. In this characteristic seriousness he is not only close to the English race-temperament: he is American in so far as he expresses, although without theological bias, that section of English Puritanism which made its stronghold in New England.

As a poet Bryant possesses great excellence within a strictly limited range. He is even more exclusively the poet of nature than Wordsworth; throughout his poetry warmth, human interest, and human passion are almost absent. He wrote but little verse, and never really surpassed his two early efforts, *Thanatopsis* and the *Ode to a Water-fowl*; yet though he did not advance, he maintained an exceedingly high standard until the last. Within his own narrow limits, as a meditative poet, as a descriptive poet of nature, and as a master of blank verse, remarkable for its loftiness, nobility, and repose, he occupies an exceptionally high position among the poets of America; and even outside of our national limits, in that almost world-wide English literature of which ours is but a part, he has won a place which, if minor, is both honorable and secure.

STUDY LIST

BRYANT

1. Poems. "Thanatopsis," "The Ages," "To a Water-fowl," "Green River," "A Winter Piece," "The Death of the Flowers," "The Yellow Violet," "The Prairies," "Song of Marion's Men," "A Forest Hymn,"

He wrote his best poems in his youth. His place in literature is with Wordsworth. At 80 he wrote his last poem.

2. Biography and Criticism.—Life, by Parke Godwin; by D. J. Hill, in the American Authors Series; by John Bigelow, in the American Men of Letters Series; by W. A. Bradley, in the English Men of Letters Series. Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*; Stedman's *Poets of America*; Whipple's *Literature and Life*, and *Essays and Reviews*, vol. i.; Lowell's *Fable for Critics*. J. Alden's *Studies in Bryant* is a useful little book for an analytical study of Bryant's poetry.

MINOR WRITERS OF THE MIDDLE STATES

While Irving, Cooper, and Bryant were the leaders in the making of our national literature, we must remember that the full strength and importance of a literary period such as that to which they belonged cannot be measured by the work of its greatest writers alone. The natural desire of a young nation to create and possess a literature which should truly represent it was a strong incentive to a considerable number of native writers who strove to describe the American landscape or depict the novel conditions of American life. The three great leaders whose work we have just studied were consequently only the strongest and completest representatives of a literary activity in which many minor authors shared, and the men by whom they were surrounded worked under the same conditions, and helped forward, each after his own fashion, the same general result. Having studied the period during which our national literature took shape in the work of its greatest writers, we must now endeavor to look at it from a more general and comprehensive point of view.

Let us look at our literary history as a whole, from the time of the Revolution to about the middle of the present century, and ask ourselves how this important epoch is related to that long Colonial era of preparation which preceded it.

We have already seen how the force which raised up and strengthened our oratory, our poetry, and our prose during this first stage of our national history, was the ever-increasing sense of the dignity and meaning of our national life. But this spirit of patriotism could not eradicate those deep-seated differences between section and section, which had been present from the first. While sharing in the wider national life, each section of the country retained its own peculiar character and aims. Local loyalty and local jealousy remained. We had a political center in our national capitol; but no city could hold a similar relation to our intellectual and literary life. In France and England the condition has been widely different. For the past five or six hundred years London has been so distinctly the focus-point of English thought that her literary history is almost identical with the national life itself. In the brief life of our literature, on the contrary, the intellectual center has continually shifted from one section of the country to another. When we regard the rise of our national literature from this aspect, we are chiefly impressed by the small part played in it by New England, the most scholarly and intellectual of all the original Colonial groups. The period under review is clearly remarkable for the temporary transference of literary leadership from New England to

the South, and from the South to the Middle States. When the Revolution and the critical years that succeeded it brought forth our great orators and political writers, although New England and the Middle States were neither silent nor uninfluential, the real superiority lay with the South. From the South came two of the greatest political productions of that epoch—*The Declaration of Independence*, and the *Constitution of the United States*.^{*} New England gave us James Otis, Samuel Adams, and Fisher Ames; together with the Middle States she gave us Franklin; but the South gave Patrick Henry, Thomas Jefferson, Madison, Lee, and Monroe. John Marshall, the Chief Justice of the United States during a most critical period of its history, a man of far-reaching influence and some literary gifts, was, like many of the Southern leaders, a son of Virginia.

Aside from oratory and politics, in spite of the early literary superiority of the Puritan, the foundations of our really national literature were laid in the Middle States. Poetry really found its voice, not in the pretentious efforts of the New Englanders, Barlow, Trumbull, or Dwight, but in the verse of the Philadelphian William Clifton, or yet more indubitably in a few lyrics of the New Jersey poet Philip Freneau. In romance, through the stories of Charles Brockden Brown, the Middle States were not only in advance of the rest of the country, but were practically without a rival. In the first quarter of the present cen-

^{*} *The Federalist*, which may be ranked as the third, belongs in part to the Middle and in part to the Southern States.

tury the leadership of the middle region of the country became even more marked, and in that great section New York succeeded Philadelphia as a literary center. The view of the Southern poet Edgar Allan Poe on this matter must be received with caution, as he was disposed to undervalue the literary group in New England, still it is worth noting that he wrote as late as 1846: "New York literature may be taken as a fair representation of the country at large. The city itself is the focus of American letters. Its authors include perhaps one fourth of all in America and the influence they exert on their brethren, if seemingly silent, is not the less extensive and decisive."* If we apply these remarks to an earlier period than that of which Poe wrote, they can hardly be thought exaggerated. From the literary advent of Irving in 1807 to the decisive entrance of Longfellow and Emerson about 1836, the work of our greatest men of letters was centered in New York. Two of our then most famous authors, Irving and Cooper, were sons of the Middle States; the third, Bryant, chose New York city as the sphere of his literary career. Besides the greater lights, there were many others of lesser magnitude. To New York belong the two poets FITZ-GREENE HALLECK (1790-1867) and JOSEPH RODMAN DRAKE (1795-1820), united in their friendship and their work.

Halleck, like Bryant, was of New England birth and descent, but a New Yorker by adoption. Drake

* *The Literature of New York*. Poe's Works, Stoddard's edition, p. 435.

belonged to the great metropolis by birth as well as by residence. These two writers began their work in 1819, the year of the publication of Cooper's *Precaution*, with the *Croaker Poems*, a witty and satirical chronicle of New York life which may be compared to Irving and Paulding's *Salmagundi*. The best verses of Halleck, although somewhat rhetorical and declamatory, have an undoubted spirit and vigor. They stand in somewhat the same relation to poetry of a less noisy and more subtle order that a good brass band bears to a symphony orchestra. He once said to Drake, "It would be heaven to lounge upon the rainbow and read Tom Campbell," and his verses suggest the martial music of Campbell's battle-lyrics, or the telling but showy rhetoric of Byron. His *Marco Bozzaris* has been declaimed by innumerable schoolboys. Halleck visited Europe in 1822, and some of his best poems are due to his foreign impressions. Among them are his tribute to *Burns* and his *Alnwick Castle*, the home of the great family of Northumberland. In the latter there is that intrusion of a satirical humor into the very fortress of romance, that sudden half-cynical drop from poetry to prose, which is not only characteristic of Halleck but of the American spirit, a spirit destined to reappear later and in a more aggressive form in the writings of Mark Twain.

One poem of Halleck's stands quite apart from those we have mentioned: his tribute to the memory of his friend Drake, which has a simplicity and a directness which speak of genuine sorrow. The young

"Green be the grass where
 Sprung up my better days
 Long since they went to live
 And I am left to find"

poet whose loss is here commemorated died of consumption at twenty-five, cut off in the opening of a career which was full of promise. He is chiefly remembered as Halleck's friend and co-worker, and as the author of a spirited lyric, *The American Flag*, and a longer poem, *The Culprit Fay*. The first of these holds a high—perhaps the highest—place among our national songs. The verse has a stirring and martial music, and when we get beyond the somewhat strained and over-elaborate figure in the opening stanza, the poem gains in power as it becomes more simple and direct.

Joseph Rodman Drake.

"Flag of the brave! thy folds shall fly,
The sign of hope and triumph high,
When speaks the signal-trumpet tone,
And the long line comes gleaming on.
Ere yet the life-blood, warm and wet,
Has dimmed the glistening bayonet,
Each soldier eye shall brightly turn
To where thy sky-born glories burn;
And, as his springing steps advance,
Catch war and vengeance from the glance."

The Culprit Fay is the story of a fairy condemned to do penance for loving a mortal. It is slight, pretty, and fanciful, perhaps over-ingenuous. It follows the traditions of fairy poetry and suggests the famous description of Queen Mab in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, or the quaint fancies of Drayton's *Nymphidia*. Here and there are delicate and beautiful bits of natural description and an occasional strain that, as Professor Beers has observed, recalls the melody of Coleridge's *Christabel*.

Another prominent member of this New York or "Knickerbocker" group was NATHANIEL PARKER WILLIS (1806-1867), a light but pleasing writer once

N. P. widely popular. Like Bryant, Willis early
Willis. won distinction by his verse; like Bryant, he left his native New England and became an editor in New York. Here, however, the resemblance ends, for Willis, "all natty and jaunty and gay," as Lowell described him, was essentially a writer for the day and not for posterity. His thin, fluent verse has no trace of Bryant's somber dignity and concentrated power, but some of his shorter poems are still worthy of a place in our anthologies. His service to our prose was a more important one. By his stories, sketches, and reminiscences of travel, written in an easy, sprightly way, but in the careful spirit of the artist and with a genuine feeling for style, he helped to raise the standard of workmanship and refine the public taste. Many other New York writers of the time must be passed over, or given but the merest mention here. Among these were SAMUEL WOODWORTH, a magazine editor, remembered for his single poem *The Old Oaken Bucket*; GEORGE P. MORRIS, a New York journalist born in Philadelphia, the author of several homely, simple lyrics, as *Woodman, Spare that Tree*; and JULIAN C. VERPLANCK, a lecturer and critic.

Although our literature thus had, for the time, its center in New York, it must not be inferred that the other parts of the country were entirely unproductive.

While New England could boast of no writers com-

While Boston was producing and
becoming an art, and was
expanding Shakespeare to
be integrated rather than critical
audiences

parable to the greatest of those in the Middle States, we note the signs of the great literary awakening of New England which was near at hand. The *North American Review*, destined to be for years the mouth-piece of the best thought and scholarship of the country, was founded in Boston by an ambitious group of young men in 1815. A new spirit, the realization of the beautiful, was softening the crude but intense and vigorous intellect of the Puritan. WASHINGTON ALLSTON, the painter, returned from Europe, filled with the charm of the Old World, to lecture on art. RICHARD HENRY DANA (1787-1879) in his ambitious and once well-known poem *The Buccaneer*, and in some unpretentious verses, *The Beach Bird*, showed a true poetic instinct. Such poets, with JAMES 1795-1875
* G. PERCIVAL and CHARLES SPRAGUE, were promises of a time when the New England genius should really free itself in song.

Nor was the South wholly silent in this awakening. EDWARD C. PINKNEY (*Rodolph and other Poems*, 1825) trilled his airy love-lyrics like a descendant of some seventeenth-century cavalier, or commemorated Indian maidens among the trees; while WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS tried his 'prentice hand at poetry, fortunately to abandon it later and become one of the most popular of early Southern story-writers.

We naturally ask ourselves why it was that New England, originally superior to the sister Colonies in education, intellectual force, and literary production, should have failed to keep the lead during those years when, with the quickening of the nation's

Percival wrote a poem on "Consumption"
"There is a dangerous
in morbid decay, when the light
of beauty is fading away."

life, a higher and more truly national literature was taking form. Clearly it was not because of any weakening of the Puritan mind, for a few years later, in the days of Emerson, Hawthorne, and Longfellow, New England not only re-established her superiority, but exhibited a new literary power differing from and surpassing anything she had shown herself capable of hitherto.

The causes of literary movements often lie too deep to be fully understood, but the most obvious causes of this shifting of the literary center may be briefly suggested. It is not hard to see why the South should have come to the front in an era of oratory and political discussion, for the conditions under which a Southern gentleman lived fitted him to excel as a political leader and a man of affairs. The warmer and more unrestrained Southern temperament found a natural expression in the fervor of oratory, and the Southern proprietors ruling over their broad acres, or taking a large share in the conduct of the State, were trained to command. The same conditions which made Virginia the mother of statesmen made her the leader in a time when the best productions of our literature were political in tone. It is equally clear why the superiority of the South, so marked in this especial sphere, should not have extended beyond it, for in the general diffusion of education the South was still backward. In purely literary cultivation the supremacy lay neither with the South nor with New England, but first with Philadelphia and afterwards

with New York, the two greatest cities of the Middle States. The more closely we look into it, the more we become persuaded of the high cultivation of Philadelphia during the later Colonial times and the early period of the Republic, as compared with the other parts of the country. This cultivation was, and still is, so reserved and unobtrusive that it has been often undervalued and overlooked. For more than a century, while it remained the capital of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia was the first town in the Colonies in commercial, political, social, and literary importance. Until 1830 it was the first city in population. From 1790 to 1800 it was the seat of the national government, and at the close of that period it had "gathered a more agreeable society, fashionable, literary, and political, than could be found anywhere except in a few capital cities of Europe."* The Irish poet Tom Moore, who visited Philadelphia in 1804, was taken into the little band of literary men grouped about Joseph Dennie, who edited a magazine called *The Portfolio*. Moore was so much impressed with Dennie and his friends, the "sacred few," as he calls them, that he pronounced Philadelphia the only place in America "that could boast of a literary society." This view is no doubt hasty and extravagant, but it has in it an element of truth. Dennie and his co-workers, while not great men, were the most active and promising group of writers then in the country. Far more convincing than this foreign judgment is the record of the city's actual achievement. Philadelphia had

* Adams's *History of the United States*, vol. i. p. 119.

the most famous men of science, the best libraries, the first and best subscription library in the country. In more directions than can here be mentioned the city was the pioneer. Our earliest drama was written in the "Quaker City." The first monthly magazine (1741) and the first daily newspaper were started there. *The Portfolio* (1801-1827) before mentioned, and afterwards *Graham's Magazine* (1841-1857), were in their day among our leading periodicals.* More than any other of our great cities, Philadelphia was the publishing center of the country, and gave Americans the earliest and best reprints of the English and Latin classics. Even from a very early period of its history there are indications that in Philadelphia, if scholarship was less profound, there was a wider acquaintance with the lighter forms of literature.† Yet although the city could boast of some creditable writers, it showed on the whole a cultivated appreciation of the works of others rather than a marked creative or original power. It ceased to be the national capital, and its literary supremacy gradually passed to New York, which, as the century advanced, surpassed it in wealth, population, and commercial importance.‡

* On this subject see *The Philadelphia Magazines and their Contributors, 1741-1850*, by Albert H. Smyth.

† See what has been said on this subject on pages 67-72 *supra*. The Philadelphian William Clifton (1772-1799) is a good example of the early aspirations towards poetry and culture.

‡ From the time of the opening of the Erie Canal in 1825, which connected New York with Lake Erie by way of the Hudson River, the growth of the city was very rapid.

While these two great cities of the Middle region thus successively led the way, the New England genius was still retarded by the narrowness and lack of general cultivation which resulted from the strictness of its religion. Professor McMaster tells us that in 1784 the Puritanical taste of the readers of Boston was still strong, and that their principles forbade them to read many of the greatest English writers. We shall see in the next chapter the effect of the emancipation of the New England mind from these narrow ideas in the rise of the greatest group of writers the country has yet produced.

STUDY LIST

LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE STATES

1. Halleck.—Wilson's *Life and Letters of Fitz-Greene Halleck*.

2. Willis.—Life of, by Beers, in *American Men of Letters Series*.

3. Simms.—Life of, by Trent, in *American Men of Letters Series*, and article on by John Erskine in *Leading American Novelists*. For Philadelphia authors of this period, see E. P. Oberholtzer's *Literary History of Philadelphia*.

J. G. Burleigh 1795-1828
B. Bonbrant - wrote "The Sea and Niagara"
R. H. Wilde (Hesperia)
Mana. S. Croft 1795-1835
"Joseph or the Rude of Seron"

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE IN NEW ENGLAND, 1835-1894

FROM about 1830-40 New England entered upon a long period of literary supremacy. The intellectual awakening which preceded and accompanied this literary period began in Boston and its vicinity, and Boston rapidly distanced New York as a literary center, as New York had distanced Philadelphia. Between 1826 and 1840 nearly all of the great New England writers of this period had definitely begun their work. Longfellow published his first collection of poems in 1826. Holmes began his work in 1827, and Hawthorne in 1828. Emerson, Prescott, Lowell, Whittier, and Motley all followed between 1830 and 1840. The expression of the New England mind in the works of this group of writers constitutes, as a whole, our most memorable contribution to literature; it is one of the greatest and most lasting achievements of our American civilization.

The intellectual leadership thus gained by New England was not in one but in many directions; it did not consist merely in the productions of a group of men of genius, but it had back of it the impetus of a widespread popular movement. Theology had been from the first the dominant force in New England,

and this literary epoch was closely related to a sweeping reaction, which began in the early years of the century, against the old theology. This reaction was the rise of Unitarianism. We need not speak here of the purely religious or doctrinal side of this movement. Quite apart from this, it had a most important influence on literature. In the early days of New England men were compelled or expected to think and believe on all points as the ministers bade them. The Unitarian movement brought with it the assertion of individual opinions, and promoted the greatest freedom of thought.

To measure the force and significance of this movement we must recall the iron dogmatism, the severity, and the narrowness from which it was a reaction. The men of early New England may fairly be called fanatical, narrow-minded, and superstitious; but at their worst they were a strong race, limited and confined by restrictions of their own making. They had great powers, undeveloped or unused, a deep reserve of poetry, and a capacity for independent thought. The Puritan, as one of the greatest of the New England poets described him, was a man who fought with a prayer on his lips: a man of dry, "unwilling humor,"

"With a soul full of poetry, though it has qualms
In finding a happiness out of the Psalms";*

a soul tender beneath an outside roughness,

"That sees visions, knows wrestlings of God with the will,
And has its own Sinais and thunderings still."*

* Lowell's *Fable for Critics*.

These men had put the largest part of their intellectual force into damnatory sermons or theological arguments; they had been cramped and unequally developed by the lack of a truly liberal culture, their gentler and æsthetic side had been repressed and starved. Yet the effort of the Puritan to rear a group of States in a new world, where men's thoughts and acts should be made to square with a set standard, resulted, as might have been expected, in "an intellectual Declaration of Independence." Restiveness under discipline and restraint grew even in the days of Wigglesworth and Cotton Mather. In the Unitarian movement, which took an organized form about 1815, the New England mind, long checked, was in open revolt, until, in the teaching of Emerson, we find the opinion of each individual held up as superior to all external authority or guidance. As Unitarianism directly tended to promote intellectual freedom, its relation to literature was naturally both direct and important. Associated at first with Harvard College, Unitarianism had a distinctly literary side, and the duty of a wider culture was almost one of the articles of its creed. According to a competent authority, its "most remarkable quality" was "its high social and intellectual character."* The earliest of its leading preachers, J. S. Buckminster, in an address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1809, lamented the decline of scholarship, urged the importance of a deeper and more exact knowledge, and declared that

* Adams's *History of the United States*, vol. ix. p. 183.

New England was on the threshold of a new intellectual era.* William Ellery Channing (1780-1842), the greatest organizer of the movement, advocated the study of foreign literatures, and dwelt upon the need of a more generous culture. "Self-culture," he said, "is religious. . . . The connection between moral and intellectual culture is often overlooked." †

Nor was it merely that Unitarianism was the means of helping many in New England to gain that richer and fuller cultivation, the lack of which had retarded its free and harmonious development. It must be further noted that the doors were thus opened to foreign literature and thought at a time when English literature was on fire with new life and inspiration, when the Old World was in the ferment of fresh enthusiasms, new philosophies, and strange social ideas. The *idealistic* or *transcendental* philosophy had recently arisen in Germany, and had been brought from thence into England by Coleridge. The general tendency of these transcendental thinkers, or *transcendentalists* as they were called, was to regard thought, or spirit, and not matter, as true reality. One of them spoke of all this universe about us, which seems so solid and substantial, as but the thought of God made apparent. They laid great stress on man's intuitions, and on the presence of God's spirit in man and in nature. These lofty and spiritual conceptions were readily absorbed into New England thought, for they harmonized with the mystical and somewhat

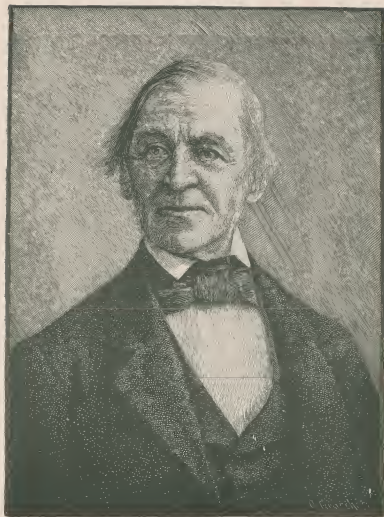
* Buckminster's Works.

† Address on Self-culture.

visionary strain in the Puritan character. Edward Everett, the orator, returned from Germany in 1820, and lectured on this German thought, and it also found its way into New England thought through the works of Coleridge and afterwards of Thomas Carlyle. In more purely literary directions the foreign influences of the time were no less stimulating. Since the time of Pope the whole spirit of English literature had been sweetened and renewed by a spirit of tenderness and charity. Such great poets as Burns, Wordsworth, and Coleridge had shown a new power to feel, a new sense of the sacredness and beauty of nature, and of the worth and dignity of man. Finally, the love of humanity, and the growth of a democratic feeling, were prompting aspirations and attempts to introduce better social systems, and in these hopes some of the advanced thinkers in New England afterwards came to share. Thus, released from the weight of formalism and asceticism, and at the same time quickened and uplifted by influences of a most congenial and stimulating character, the New England mind ceased to expend itself wholly on theology, and asserted through a group of great writers those literary powers which had been so long suppressed.

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-1882)

In its great literary epoch, the reserve power, the stored-up energy and repressed sympathies of New England, first found an adequate outlet in literature. We can detect the throb of the strenuous New England



RALPH WALDO EMERSON

nature in its early history and under the stiffness and pedantry of its early writings, yet we feel that the Colonial Puritan has in him much that he never really puts into written words. The barriers to progress and to expression once swept away, the inherent force in this great section of our country enabled it in a few years to distance its competitors in the Southern and Middle States. It was not perhaps so much that the Middle States went backward in literary production, although this was to a certain extent the case, as that New England, her restrictions once removed, shot suddenly ahead.

Geographically, this literary manifestation of New England centers at Cambridge, in that group of scholars to which Longfellow and Holmes belong, and at the quiet old neighboring town of Concord, which is associated with Emerson and Thoreau. The greatest individual force in the movement, so far as the influence of any one man is concerned, is to be found in the life, character, and work of Emerson. By this we do not mean that Emerson was a greater writer than any of the men who surrounded him; his relative merits as a writer are a matter for individual opinion: we mean that he was the most representative of the whole movement, and that he was the most influential in shaping its form and character. To say best what men all around one are laboring more or less ineffectually to define and put into words, is to become a prophet in one's own country. Emerson did this, and perhaps this personal power to stimulate and inspire, and to make the vague more tangible and effective,

was the greatest element in his work. The testimony of his famous contemporaries, his wide and enduring influence as a lecturer, the immense veneration which he awakened in New England, all bear witness to the power that went out from him as a man as well as a writer. Hawthorne said that "his mind acted upon other minds of a certain constitution with a wonderful magnetism, and drew many men upon long pilgrimages to speak to him face to face."* Lowell, who belonged to a somewhat later generation, recalls the effect that Emerson's thrilling voice had on him in his young manhood. He "brought us life," Lowell declares; he was to generous youth "the sound of the trumpet that the young soul longs for."† One cause of this power lay in the fact that Emerson found the right word for ideas and enthusiasms which the men about him were laboring to put in tangible form. He stood and spoke for the peculiar temperament and for the intellectual traditions of New England as modified and enlarged by the new spirit of his age. Like the best spirits of his time and locality, he is widely receptive of foreign influences. He draws inspiration from the poetic thought of Plato, from the German idealists, from the mystical seer Swedenborg, from the Eastern religions, from Coleridge and the nature-poetry of Wordsworth; yet with it all he retains every native peculiarity, and his words have the unmistakable local flavor of New England. He is not a typical

* "The Old Manse" in *Mosses from an Old Manse*.

† Essay on *Emerson the Lecturer*.

American, as Lincoln was, nor even as Lowell was. Spare, angular, hard-featured, with lean jaws and thin, firm lips, he is distinctly the product of New England. By inheritance and disposition he represents it in its spirituality, its purity, its nervous energy, its intellectual chill and vigor,—in its limitations and its strength.

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston in 1803. By actual inheritance the most distinctive intellectual life of New England for generations back was summed up in him. He was sprung from one of those families of ministers and scholars which Holmes has called the “academic” families of New England. He could count a minister among his ancestors on both his father’s and his mother’s side, for eight generations. His father, the pastor of the First Church of Boston, was a Unitarian and a friend of Channing. For the first thirty years of his life Emerson seemed as though he were destined to continue this ministerial succession with but little deviation from the family pattern. He went to the Boston Latin School and to Harvard, where he graduated in 1821. He taught school, studied divinity, became a minister, and in 1826 was called to the Second Unitarian Church of Boston as associate pastor. In its outward features this is the biography of hundreds of “academic” New Englanders. But the young Emerson had grown up in a ferment of strange doctrines. His philosophy was carrying him beyond the limits of the teachings of Channing and his associates, and even in the Unitarian pulpit he felt

Emerson's
life.

himself constrained. He differed with his congregation upon an important point of doctrine, and in 1832, after a frank avowal of his views, he felt it right to resign his charge. It was a courageous and manly course, for it involved the sacrifice of a promising career for what Emerson believed to be the truth.

In 1833 Emerson went abroad for about a year, meeting Carlyle, among many other famous men, and laying the foundations of what proved a long and memorable friendship. After his return to this country he settled in 1834 at Concord, Massachusetts, in the old-fashioned house that Hawthorne has celebrated under the name of the "Old Manse." Emerson was then about thirty; nearly half a century of life was yet before him,—the quiet, uneventful life of a thinker, scholar, and teacher,—and during all this long period Concord remained his home. Few spots in all our country are more hallowed or inspiring than the little town that thus became the center of Emerson's influence. There on the banks of the Masketaquid, a tranquil stream that glides with almost imperceptible flow through the green meadows, the first patriot blood was shed in our war for independence. There, in the same room in which Emerson wrote his *Nature*, Hawthorne wrote his *Mosses from an Old Manse*. There, too, on a high ridge in the great cemetery, Hawthorne is buried, while Emerson lies near him, a mighty block of New England granite for his headstone, the pines of New England casting their brown needles over his grave. Near by is Walden Pond, on whose wooded shores Henry Thoreau, Emerson's

eccentric disciple, built his hut in search of simplicity and solitude.

In the winter after his settlement at Concord Emerson began his career as a lecturer, delivering courses in Boston and in many towns throughout New England, and gradually coming to find in the lecture platform a pulpit from which he could speak his thought free from all external control. The year 1836 is notable in his history and in that of our literature. It was in this year that Emerson composed his *Concord Hymn*, one of the best and most popular of his shorter poems, in honor of the farmers "embattled" in the cause of liberty; in this year, too, he published his first book, *Nature*, which contains much of the essence of his teaching. There is probably very little strictly original thought in this famous book; its originality lies rather in the freshness and vigor of the form in which old ideas were embodied. There is this indescribably quickening quality in most of Emerson's work, so that an old thought seems vitalized by his touch, and acts on us as a spiritual tonic. The book deals, in a rapt and poetic fashion, with the relations of nature, or the so-called physical universe, to the life of man. From the consideration of Nature as the minister to man's temporal and bodily needs we rise to a view of Nature as the teacher and inspirer of his spirit. The book is permeated with the ideal philosophy of the Germans, with the nature-poetry of Wordsworth and the nature-teachings of Carlyle. Emerson, too, like his great German and English predecessors, sees in this varied spectacle of Nature

but a manifestation of God to the soul. "The world is a remoter and inferior incarnation of God, a projection of God into the unconscious. . . . The foundations of man are not in matter, but in spirit." But along with the re-announcement of such ideas we find that resonant note of self-reliance and hopeful courage eminently characteristic of Emerson himself. Why, he complains, should we look backward? "The sun shines to-day also. There is more wool and flax in the fields. 'There are new lands, new men, new thoughts.'" "Build, therefore," he concludes, "your own world." Such words are instinct with the stirring spirit of a young land; they make us feel how habitually Emerson turned his face towards the rising sun.

This same spirit of resolute self-reliance, pointing us to to-day as a new day, is shown in Emerson's next important work, *The American Scholar*, an oration delivered before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in 1837. In it we are taught that the true scholar, while he uses all the learning of the past, must yet, before all, see and think for himself. Our day of apprenticeship to the learning of other lands is gone by. "We will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak our own minds." With Emerson no authority is sacred but the guidance of one's own spirit. "Every mind," he writes, "has a new compass, a new North, a new direction of its own"; and in such utterances we can measure the extent of the rebound from that iron dogmatism of his Puritan forefathers which sought to conform every thought and impulse to its will.

As Emerson's stimulating powers became more generally recognized, he gradually became the center of a group of thinkers known as the "transcendentalists." The so-called "transcendental movement" which those followers of the new light inaugurated may be regarded as an outgrowth and extension of New England Unitarianism. It was largely indebted to the ideal philosophy of the recent German thinkers, and on its humanitarian side it adopted and endeavored to put into practice certain wild notions of social reform. Severely practical as it may seem, the high-strung New England nature has a strong tinge of the visionary, and the transcendentalists included some long-haired prophets who confused and mystified themselves and their hearers with high-sounding and "Orphic utterances." In spite of frequent assertions to the contrary, Emerson himself does not always escape the prevailing tendency to disguise a comparatively familiar thought in mystical and oracular phrases. Charles Dickens declared that he was given to understand when in Boston "that whatever was unintelligible would certainly be transcendental."* Lowell has pricked some of the inflated extravagances of the time with the keen point of his humor. "Not a few impecunious zealots abjured the use of money (unless earned by other people), professing to live on the internal revenues of the spirit. Communities were established everywhere, where everything was to be common but common sense."†

* *American Notes.*

† *Essay on Thoreau.*

*Implication pertaining to Transcendentalism
the celebrated legend of
Charles May Thoreau.*

Two direct results of this "transcendental movement" were the establishment of *The Dial* (1840), a "The Dial." magazine for the promulgation of the new doctrines, and the founding of Brook Farm, an agricultural and industrial community intended to exemplify the ideal state of society. Immense hopes and unselfish efforts were centered in *The Dial*. Emerson was a frequent contributor, and for a time its editor, some of his best-known prose and verse appearing first in its pages. It gathered the leading transcendentalists about it:² George Ripley, a scholarly Unitarian minister, afterwards the head of Brook Farm;³ Margaret Fuller, its first editor, and a woman of wide acquirements, who was called the "priestess of transcendentalism";⁴ A. Bronson Alcott, mystic and vegetarian, who chopped wood and contributed "Orphic sayings," which were at least sufficiently unintelligible for the most transcendental taste. With these were many more equally distinguished, so that *The Dial* shows us this remarkable movement in all its fervor. Carlyle thought that the writers for *The Dial* seemed in danger of "dividing themselves from the *fact* of this present universe." Vulgar fact, however, overtook them, and after about four years money difficulties brought the enterprise to an end.

Transcendentalism had a humanitarian as well as a philosophic and religious side, and it was this humanitarian zeal to better the world that took shape in Brook Farm. We need not consider here whether this desire to re-organize society sprang up spontaneously in New Eng-

Brook
Farm.

land, or whether, like the transcendental philosophy, it was partly the result of foreign influences. In either case, it was in accord with certain aspirations and theories of the time. Nearly half a century earlier Coleridge and Southey had planned to found an ideal community on the banks of the Susquehanna, and since that time thinkers both in England and in France had preached this doctrine of social reconstruction, or, as in some cases, striven to put it into practice. Consciously or unconsciously, Brook Farm embodied the essence of these foreign ideas. The Association secured about two hundred acres of land at West Roxbury, some nine miles from Boston, and started there a community which should combine the teaching and study of literature and science with agriculture and other industries. The enterprise was carried on in the face of increasing practical difficulties for about five years. Emerson was not a member of the community, although interested in its progress.

This much has been said about New England transcendentalism and some of its manifestations, because Emerson is its best exponent and its chief representative. We must, however, leave these more general subjects and return to Emerson himself. The remainder of his tranquil life, greatly influential as it was, requires but little comment. From time to time he added to his published works a volume of essays or a book of poems. He made a second trip to Europe in 1847, and summed up his impressions of England in his *English Traits*. He continued to write and to

lecture occasionally until towards the close of his life. He died April 27, 1882.

We have spoken of Emerson's subtle and widespread influence, and have referred it partly to the fact that he fitly represented the New England mind during a certain important phase of its thought, and partly to the magnetic attraction of his pure and exalted character, the "intellectual gleam diffused about his presence like the garment of a shining one."*

But the great writer or thinker works not merely for his own generation but for succeeding generations. He represents not merely a set of men, or a single community, but something common to man. To reach a really just estimate of Emerson as a writer, it would be necessary to put aside, for the time, this personal, and therefore comparatively temporary, aspect of his work, and judge of his writings as a thing apart and distinct. We are forced to determine how far he succeeded in communicating to his written works that quickening power which he himself exerted; how far his poetry and his prose are likely to survive that wave of transcendental enthusiasm which produced them. This separation of the permanent influence of Emerson's writings from the personal influence of Emerson himself time only can really accomplish; but in the meantime we must be on our guard against accepting without reserve the eulogies of his imme-

* Hawthorne, *Mosses from an Old Manse*: "The Old Manse."

diate followers, who wrote under the spell of his living voice and presence.

Without entering upon Emerson's probable place among English writers, we can here only speak briefly of the general character of his work. He speaks to us as poet and as essayist; but in either case his work has much the same essential qualities. In both poetry and prose he is emphatically the philosophic and religious teacher, the lover of nature; but dwelling in clear, bracing, rarefied atmosphere, remote from human passion and human sorrow. In both his prose and poetry, too, we find that lack of a rounded and even excellence, that absence of the power to construct a work which should be great not in detached passages, but as a whole, which is admittedly one of his most serious defects. Emerson's verse has undoubtedly an individuality and distinction rarely found in our poets. It has admirable qualities, but radical shortcomings, which show, it is to be feared, the inborn limitations of Emerson himself. It is the creation of the brain rather than the utterance of the heart; it fails in a warm, living, generous humanity; above all, the lines do not flow and sing themselves, as those of a true poet do, but the music seems half-frozen in the instrument. When Emerson was a boy at singing-school, a single exhibition of his vocal powers induced the teacher to tell him that he need not return. He lacked the musical faculty, and we can hardly read one of his longer poems to the end without being irritated by some harsh or limping line.

Emerson, in his prose, if an inconsequent, is an

immensely stimulating writer. His mind seems to have the edge and glitter of highly-tempered steel. His short, terse, epigrammatic sentences pierce us like so many separate sword-thrusts. The intense, nervous vitality of the New Englander snaps and sparkles in his abrupt and oracular utterance. Brilliant, with a tiring, unrelieved brilliancy, his light, like that of the electric spark, may prick but cannot warm. He writes with a conscientious minuteness of homely things, "the meal in the firkin; the milk in the pan";* nevertheless, his sympathy with the every-day problems and experiences of men and women is theoretical rather than real and spontaneous. In reality he has that abstraction and equable serenity possible for those who survey life from the mountain-peaks of philosophy. He has an invincible hopefulness; but we miss in him that bond of tenderness, that sense of comradeship that we have with the great souls who have bled and stumbled on the common highway. He remains coldly intellectual; absolutely unimpassioned, as though man were but a superior thinking-machine, the tension of his thought renders his work singularly lacking in the quality of repose. These and other limitations are evident in his prose; and while his work abounds in wise maxims, and in memorable and noble passages, we may agree with Matthew Arnold in refusing to place him with the greatest masters of style.

Yet Emerson stands squarely among the great men of our century. His voice reaches us from the

* *The American Scholar*. Compare the whole passage.

heights, unworldly, clear, and pure. It is a great thing that our rich and commercial America, in the abundance of its material successes, should have brought forth a teacher of such unsullied life and lofty purposes, who bore unswerving witness to the worth of the things which are not seen. This was his work and mission, a great and beautiful one, to quicken our spirit, to increase our hold on the spiritual and eternal. We may well be proud when we read what a French writer has written of him: "In this North America, which is pictured to us as so materialistic, I find the most ideal writer of our times."

STUDY LIST

EMERSON

1. **Essays.**—"Nature" and "The American Scholar," in *Nature, Addresses and Lectures*; "Uses of Great Men," and "Shakespeare; or, The Poet," in *Representative Men*; "Self-reliance," "Friendship," "History," in *Essays*, 1st series; "Character," in *Essays*, 2d series. *English Traits* may also be read, both for the fairness of its criticism and the glimpse it gives us of Emerson's personality.

2. **Poems.**—"Concord Hymn," "Walden," "Threnody," "The Snow-storm," "The Rhodora," "The Humble Bee," "Boston Hymn," "Voluntaries," "The Past," "Wood-notes," "Forbearance."

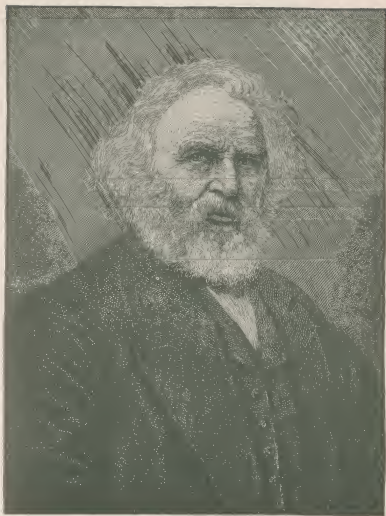
3. **Biography and Criticism.**—Lives, by J. E. Cabot; by Holmes, in *American Men of Letters Series*; by G. E. Woodberry, in *English Men of Letters Series*; Whipple's *Recollections of Eminent Men*; Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*. For criticism, see Lowell's essay "Emerson, the Lecturer," in *My Study Windows*; Stedman's *Poets of*

America; Arnold's "Emerson," in *Discourses in America*; and Leslie Stephen's "Emerson," in *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. iv.

4. For an account of Brook Farm, see *Brook Farm, Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors*, by L. Swift; Frothingham's *Life of Ripley* and Higginson's *Life of Margaret Fuller Ossoli*, both in *The American Men of Letters Series*.

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW (1807-1882)

We have said that Emerson widened the narrow boundaries of New England thought, enlarging the channels for the freer flow of European ideas, but the Puritan nature required something in addition to this emancipation of the intellect for its full development. It needed beauty, sentiment, warmth, and the grace of romantic associations. The general tone of life throughout the New England States had been upright and hard-working, but severely practical, colorless, and plain. There was little within the blank walls of the whitewashed meeting-house to touch the sense of beauty,—little within the scope even of the more cultivated on which the imagination could live. The English Puritan had desecrated cathedrals, he had let in the white daylight through windows which had once been radiant with the pictured stories of saints and martyrs; the American Puritan had alienated himself from the grace, joyousness, and inspiration of much of the world's best poetry, living his meager existence, indifferent or antagonistic to a world of beauty and power to him almost unknown. These



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sterling, hard-featured men needed to grow in this power to feel; they needed to have this daily life—too often crude, petty, and rigid—expanded and softened by that nameless charm of poetry, legend, and art which with the consecration of a long past and a thousand beautiful associations make up the magic of the Old World. This need of the refining and cultivating grace of Europe was not indeed peculiar to New England; to a greater or less extent it was a need of the country at large. It is true that in prose Irving had communicated to his countrymen some of this fascinating flavor of the older civilizations, but in poetry it first began to diffuse itself through the verse of Longfellow, steeped in the fragrance of a romantic past. Longfellow was, indeed, the poet of many national themes—of Indian life and legend, of the early Puritan settler, of the parted Acadian lovers; nevertheless, his absorption of European influences, and his power to infuse this foreign leaven into our American life, remains his especial work and mission. Few lives are more stainless, untroubled, and complete than that of this sweet-natured and placid master of tranquil song. It moves with an even flow, like the poet's own singing, clear, melodious, and pure; the life of a quiet, gentle scholar, of high aims steadfastly pursued and worthily accomplished; deepened and disciplined by the inevitable sorrows, but without fret, or hindrance, or stain. There have been many greater poets than Longfellow, but few who followed so faithfully Milton's precept that the poet's life should first be a true

poem; few whose lives were a more perfect preparation for the full use of their best gifts. This beautiful adjustment between Longfellow's life and work is, perhaps, the thought that impresses us most deeply in studying the story of the man himself.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was born in 1807, in Portland, Maine; a beautiful town with elm-shadowed streets and a wide outlook over the sea.

Like Emerson and Bryant he sprang from the old New England stock. William Longfellow's life. Longfellow, the founder of the family in New England, settled in America in 1676. On his mother's side the poet could boast an even longer descent from that John Alden and Priscilla whose story is told in *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. Longfellow's father was a lawyer of cultivation and high standing; he was a friend and former classmate of Channing's, and in sympathy with his religious views; his mother was a lover of poetry with a sensitive and imaginative nature. With such parents, and with exceptionally beautiful surroundings, all the conditions of Longfellow's boyhood were favorable to a full and natural development. He had ready access to books, and turned to them with eagerness, but at other times he loved to look across the gleaming bay to the islands that were the Hesperides of his "boyish dreams," or to wander in the woods, thinking those "long, long thoughts" of youth that tell of the stirring of the soul. Even as a boy the unknown beyond the water had charms for him; and he warmed at the

"Spanish sailors with bearded lips,
And the beauty and mystery of the ships,
And the magic of the sea."*

Longfellow came of an active and soldierly race, but all his tastes and aspirations were bookish, and from the first he was a typical man of letters. As a trembling and expectant boy of thirteen he had found his way to the poet's corner of the *Portland Gazette*. In 1822 he went to Bowdoin College, entering the same class with Hawthorne. Here he studied hard and continued to write verses, while his ambitions gradually fixed themselves definitely on a literary career. "The fact is," he writes to his father in 1824, "I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature; my whole soul burns most ardently for it, and my earthly thought centers in it."† In those days it was even more hazardous than at present to trust to literature for support, and Longfellow's father was naturally impressed with the practical obstacles to his son's choice. A fortunate circumstance, however, unexpectedly opened the way. It had been decided to establish a professorship of modern languages at Bowdoin College, and Longfellow, who had impressed the trustees by his high character and ability, was offered the position with the understanding that he should first study in Europe to prepare himself for his duties. In that day the world for an American youth was commonly narrowed down to his own immediate

* See his poem *My Lost Youth*.

† *Life of Longfellow*, edited by Samuel Longfellow, vol. i. p. 53.

surroundings; it was an unusual as well as fortunate chance which thus enabled the young poet of nineteen, impressionable, eager, and receptive, to come so early under the spell of the Old World which was to color so much of his future thought and work. We can conjecture the vividness of these foreign impressions from *Outre-Mer*, the book in which he recorded his wanderings; we can learn from it, too, the ardent spirit in which he approached the Old World. He tells us that it was to his imagination "A kind of holy land, lying afar off beyond the blue horizon of the ocean; and when its shores first rose upon my sight, my heart swelled with the deep emotions of the pilgrim when he sees afar the spire of his devotion."*

Longfellow left home in 1826, and remained abroad about three years. By the end of that time he had made himself proficient in French, Spanish, Italian, and German; he had widened his horizon by foreign scenes and experiences, and gained the means of access to the great literatures of the modern world. In 1829 Longfellow settled down to his duties at Bowdoin College, working with his accustomed steadiness, and winning popularity as a teacher by the peculiar charm and gentleness of his disposition. In 1831 he married Miss Mary Storer Potter, whose death in 1835 was his first great sorrow. We come near to this great grief through some lines in Longfellow's poem *The Footsteps of Angels*, in which he speaks of his wife as

* *Outre-Mer*. The Pilgrim of Outre-Mer.

"the being beauteous
Who unto my youth was given,
More than all things else to love me,
And is now a saint in heaven."

Shortly before this, in 1834, Longfellow had been appointed Professor of Modern Languages at Harvard. To further prepare himself for his new duties, he again visited Europe, spending some time in the north, and studying Swedish and other northern languages. In 1836 he established himself at Cambridge, and entered upon his new duties in the year following. This old town, during those years the center of much of our best culture, was hereafter to be his home.

The years that followed Longfellow's return from his first European tour had been also years of literary activity, but it was almost wholly in the direction of prose. His work during this Literary work. period is obviously an outcome of his studies and his foreign experience. Thus we have *Outre-Mer* (1835) with its reminiscences of France, Spain, and Italy, and the prose romance of *Hyperion* (1839), the story of the Continental wanderings of a very youthful sentimentalist, Paul Flemming. The book last named, the scene of which is laid chiefly in Germany, is filled with the spirit of mediæval romance, moonlight, castles, and impassioned moods and a generally fervid and ecstatic one which comes near, at least, to sentimentality. This is the atmosphere we encounter in certain romantic German writers, and the book suggests to us how largely Longfellow was affected, not only here but elsewhere, by the

Hyperion was the Western effect of the French Revolution. It is the story of a man who has a great deal of sentimentality and a great deal of love. It is the story of a man who has a great deal of sentimentality and a great deal of love. It is the story of a man who has a great deal of sentimentality and a great deal of love.

German spirit. During these years of prose writing Longfellow contributed scholarly papers and a few short poems to the magazines, but his only considerable work in poetry was a translation of the Spanish poem *Coplas de Manrique*.

Up to 1839 Longfellow's reputation as an original poet had rested chiefly on verses scattered through the newspapers and magazines, but that year, which had been marked by the appearance of *Hyperion*, is also notable for the publication of his volume of collected poems *The Voices of the Night*. The book is a memorable one in the history of our literature. It had a wide and immediate popularity; some of the poems, like *The Psalm of Life* and *Excelsior*, sinking deep into the people's life. From this time it is to poetry that Longfellow's efforts are almost exclusively directed, and by volume after volume he steadily won for himself a more and more assured place. In 1843 he married Miss Frances Appleton, and until her tragic death in 1861 his life was full of high serenity and great achievement. After this second sorrow he still continued his scholar's life of study and literary labor, but with an increasing sense of loneliness he came to patiently look forward to the end. This peaceful and expectant spirit shines out in his last volumes, *Ultima Thule* (1880) and *In the Harbor* (1882); it is the note of a beautiful old age. Long ago had he looked "o'er sunlit seas" toward the shining Hesperides, his "land of dreams"; now in sight of the tempestuous islands of the North, he sings:

"Ultima Thule ! utmost isle ;
 Here in thy harbors for awhile
 We lower our sails ; awhile we rest
 From the unending, endless quest."

He died tranquilly at Cambridge, on the 15th of March, 1882.

We have said that as Emerson uttered foreign thought with the unmistakable twang of Yankee speech, adding to it a certain accent and independence of his own, so Longfellow was before all else the medium through which we received the grace and beauty which had grown up so slowly in an older world. It requires no extended study to show us the truth of this in Longfellow's case. As a translator he domesticates chosen poems and fragments from many literatures among us. He brings us, in his faithful and musical renderings, which in themselves are distinct contributions to literature, treasures from the poets of Germany, France, Sweden, Spain, Italy, and ancient Rome. In magnitude his translation of the *Divine Comedy* of Dante is of course his most important work as a translator, but we are further impressed by the breadth of his range and sympathies. But he not only brought Europe to us as a translator, we must note further the large proportion of his original poems which deal with, or are suggested by, foreign themes. The *Tales of a Wayside Inn* is a collection of stories supposed to be told by a group of friends about the hearthstone of the old Red Horse Inn at Sudbury, Mass.¹⁸⁶² Out of the twenty-one stories that compose the poem, only four

Long-
 fellow's
 work.

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deal directly with American themes. The rest relate to many lands, and often take us back to a distant past. Among the shorter poems *The Belfry of Bruges* and *Nuremburg* are good examples of this foreign flavor. Nor is this all. Even in the poems which treat of national subjects we can often detect the power of these foreign influences on the poet himself. A passage in a French poet suggests the refrain in *The Old Clock on the Stairs*, while that in *My Lost Youth* is the haunting "echo of a Lapland song." The metre of *Hiawatha*, perhaps his most distinctly American poem, is borrowed from the Kalevala, a national epic of Finland. It is also to be observed that this cosmopolitan flavor in Longfellow is more than a mere fondness for other lands or other literatures; it is in accordance with his deliberate conviction in regard to the true scope of a national American literature. In *Kavanagh* he ridicules and refutes the theory, so rife in the days of Barlow and Dwight, that in order to be national our literature must be a local production, shut in to American themes. Originality is not to be gained by remaining ignorant of the best that has been thought and done in the world. On the contrary he says, "Let us throw all the windows open; let us admit light and air on all sides."* And in the *Tales of a Wayside Inn* he recurs to the same prevalent notion of nationality in literature to combat it again.

* *Kavanagh*, chap. xx, p. 115. See the allusion to Hamlin Garland's presentation of an opposite view on p. 325.

"Poets—the best of them—are birds
Of passage; where their instinct leads
They range abroad for thoughts and words,
And from all climes bring home the seeds
That germinate in flowers or weeds."*

Michael Angelo. Left in man

But while Longfellow was himself a "bird of passage," laden with precious seeds from many climes, he is, though not our most distinctively American, from one aspect our most representative poet. Other American poets are more vigorous, more passionate, more patriotic than Longfellow, but none has appealed so widely to the great mass of our people, or won so universal a welcome in England. It is not a light thing to write songs that go straight to the heart of millions, and yet never stoop to win favor by a single suggestion of anything that is vulgar, or trivial, or base. Scholar as he was, Longfellow was before all the people's poet. He is the laureate of the simpler emotions, the wholesome domestic affections: pure, melodious, absolutely easy of comprehension, his comparatively restricted range of thought and mood keep him in accord with the sympathies of a large number of readers. With none of the Puritan vigor, he has the strong Puritan conscience, and he is essentially the preacher of homely morals, a counsellor and helper such as the people love. Thus, in actual fact, Longfellow, in the years of his greatest influence, was more truly the poet of our democracy than an eccentric

* *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, Part III. Interlude after "The Musician's Tale." Read the whole passage.

genius like Walt Whitman, whose chants are seldom heard beyond the most exclusive literary circles.

Having spoken of Longfellow's life, and the widespread and beautiful influence of his verse, it only remains for us to speak briefly of his poetry

Longfellow's
poetry.

Clearly his place is not among the great poets of our language. We can feel the same natural limitations in his character and in his work. He gave us all there was in him to give, but, while he was gentle, scholarly, and lovable, there is an intensity, originality, and power which it was not given him to possess. It is no disparagement to Longfellow to say that his poetry lacks those profounder and intenser notes, or that it has but little basis of deep or original thought. But if Longfellow is not among the greater poets, among the humbler singers who are the comforters and inspirers of multitudes his place is high, and, we may hope, secure. Poetry which, like Longfellow's, is unaffected, wholesome, and near to the popular sentiment, has a good chance of outlasting verse of a far more complex and ambitious character. The lovely idyll of *Evangeline*, for instance, is but a simple story, simply told. But its theme is one of lasting power over men's hearts: the strength of woman's devotion, the might of a love which "hopes and endures and is patient." In the beautiful background of nature through which the story moves, in the gentle and serene beauty which floods all the poem, we recognize the fine artistic instinct which gives permanence to a work. But excellent as are many of Longfellow's longer poems,

perhaps he is at his best in his ballads and songs. By its picturesqueness, lyrical movement, and concentrated power, the *Skeleton in Armor* rightfully takes a high place among the finest ballads in the language. By this, and such other ballads as the *Wreck of the Hesperus*, Longfellow stands, in at least one department of poetry, among the best masters. Nor should we be unmindful of the more delicate and softer charm of many of his lyrics, *The Bridge*, *Rain in Summer*, *My Lost Youth*, and many more, or the high excellence of such sonnets as *Nature* or *Dante*. In the change of fashion in poetry, it is doubtful whether the excellence of these things is now fairly estimated by the critical reader. However this may be, there can be no question about the great place which Longfellow holds in the progress not merely of our literature but of our people. His life and work together stand in our thought as a true poem, and we honor him as one who, while he may not have been a "puissant singer," yet left the world "the sweeter for his song."

STUDY LIST

LONGFELLOW

1. Poems.—"Evangeline," "The Courtship of Miles Standish," "Paul Revere's Ride," "The Skeleton in Armor," "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "A Psalm of Life," "The Light of Stars," "The Village Blacksmith," "Rain in Summer," "The Bridge," "The Day is Done," "The Arrow and the Song," "My Lost Youth," "The Children's Hour," "Morituri Salutamus," "Nature," "My Books."

2. Biography and Criticism.—Life, by Samuel Longfellow

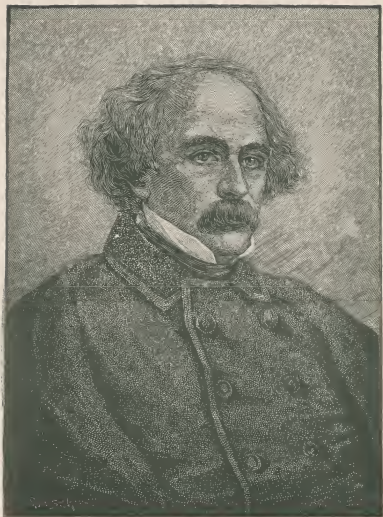
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(3 vols.); *Life*, by T. W. Higginson, in *American Men of Letters Series*. See also Stedman's *Poets of America*; Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*; Whipple's *Essays and Reviews*, vol. i. Whittier's *Literary Recreations*; J. S. Clark in *Study of English and American Poets*; C. E. Norton's *H. W. Longfellow*; Bliss Perry's "Centenary of Longfellow," in *Park Street Papers*.

NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE (1804-1864)

From Emerson, the thinker, and Longfellow, the poet, we pass to Hawthorne, the master of romance. Emerson gave expression to the ideal and visionary side of the New England intellect; Longfellow ministered to a latent sense of beauty; but Hawthorne is probably the completest and most discerning interpreter of the inmost spirit of New England Puritanism. Others may have given us more graphic and realistic pictures of the outward appearance and conditions of early New England life, but none has penetrated so deeply beneath the surface or so marvellously laid bare the workings of its soul. Hawthorne stands in a double relation to this Puritan spirit. Sprung from a Puritan ancestry, from one aspect he inherits and shares himself in certain Puritan traits: yet, like the New England of his time, he has outgrown its bygone intolerance and severity, and from another aspect he expresses the revulsion against them in all its reactionary force. In this way he is consequently as representative, though not as personally influential, as Emerson himself.

When we regard Hawthorne from the first of these two aspects, or as an inheritor of the past, we see how



NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE



deeply his life and character are rooted in his native soil. The Hawthornes were among the first settlers; William Hawthorne, the founder of the American branch of the family, having come to this country with John Winthrop in 1630. For generations they had lived in Salem, a spot which seems the very heart of New England Puritanism, the most tragically puritanical of the New England towns. There the "dark and haughty Endicott," the destroyer of the Maypole at Morton's Mount, ruled in the early days of the Colony; there Quakers were persecuted; there Roger Williams preached, and from there that great "apostle of toleration" was intolerantly driven out. More than all, Salem was a center of that dark chapter in the history of Puritanism, the witchcraft delusion, and there the unhappy victims of that tragic frenzy were tried, tormented, and put to death. An ancestor of Hawthorne's was judge in one of these witch-trials, and tradition said that he had brought a curse upon himself and his descendants because he would show no pity. Hawthorne himself refers to the persecuting spirit displayed by his ancestors, and adds: "I, the present writer, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes." * Such was the somber background of Hawthorne's genius. Born in Salem, July 4, 1804, nearly all his boyhood and a part of his later years were spent in that old home of his ancestors, and his brooding and keenly sensitive nature was thus forced into contact with the melancholy memories of its past.

* Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*.

The shadows of that past lie across his work. According to his own declaration, which, however, we must not take too literally, he had "all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil." The truth appears to be that while he belonged to a new era which had outgrown the intolerance and harshness of the earlier times, he yet shared in much of its deepest spiritual life. Hence those obscure problems of existence, the mystery of sin, the influence of the spiritual and the unseen, which fascinated many an early New England thinker, often became in Hawthorne's stories the actual basis of the work. He writes in the spirit of the artist, he does not force his moral on us in set terms; but if we penetrate to the center of his creations of wonder and beauty we find that in the heart of the romance is hidden a sermon. Such traits surround his works with a peculiar atmosphere, the spiritual atmosphere of the finest spirits of New England.

But while Hawthorne thus recreated the vanished past of New England and at the same time expressed in his own nature those essential elements in its spirit which had come down to his own times, he also shared in that liberality and tolerance which distinguished the leaders of his own generation. He realized all the shortcomings of Colonial Puritanism, and portrayed its "grim rigidity" with an unsparing severity. He has no part in the Puritanic formalities and restraints, but is keenly responsive to Nature and beauty; thus his description of "the Sylvan Dance" in *The Marble Faun* is a veritable prose idyll of a Golden Age. For a moment the conventional constraints of an artificial

life are flung aside; Donatello, the Faun of the woods, has made Miriam a child of nature like himself, and they dance in the checkered sunshine with the simple, overflowing joyousness of children. In such scenes, rare as they are amidst the shadows that darken so much of Hawthorne's work, we see his deep if wistful sympathy with health and youth and all the gladness and the freedom of the world of nature. In the early part of *The Scarlet Letter* we are told of a wild-rose bush which had sprung up just outside the iron-spiked door of a Puritan prison, and the soft pure color of those delicate pink blossoms seems doubly beautiful to us against that dark, inexorable background. This picture with its suggestive contrast may be remembered as a symbol of the peculiar genius of Hawthorne himself.

Only the general outline of Hawthorne's life can be given here. As a boy he seems to have been a great reader, but high-spirited, and inclined to neglect the routine of his appointed studies. Long-fellow's boyhood has been spoken of as that ^{Hawthorne's} of the born man of letters. Hawthorne's ^{life.} was rather that of the man of genius. By a brief residence in Maine he early developed a taste for solitude, easily understood in one of his shy and reticent nature. After graduating from Bowdoin College in 1825, he spent twelve years in Salem, reading, writing stories, many of which he burned and some of which he published, and becoming, in his own familiar phrase, "the obscurest man of letters in America." * Like

* Preface to the *Twice-Told Tales*.

many other great masters of prose, he appears to have won that delicate finish and refined beauty which distinguished his style by laborious and incessant effort. *Fanshawe*, his early romance which he afterwards suppressed, shows but little trace of his peculiar power.

The real beginning of Hawthorne's work, so far as any true recognition of it is concerned, dates from the publication of the first series of his *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. In 1841 he became a member of the Brook Farm community,* but found farm-labor and romance-writing hard to reconcile. Recording this experience in his journal, he writes: "After a hard day's work . . . my soul absolutely refuses to be poured out on paper"; and adds that in his opinion a man's higher nature "may be buried and perish in a furrow of the field just as well as under a pile of money."† Nevertheless the Brook Farm episode proved a not unfruitful one in the end, for his experience there furnished materials which Hawthorne used later in *The Blithedale Romance* (1852). In 1841 he married, and settled at Concord in the "Old Manse."‡ Thus happy in his marriage and surrounded by conditions favorable to his genius, he speaks of himself as "translated to another state of being." Under these kindly influences he composed some of the best of his short stories, which appeared with others previously published in his *Mosses from an Old Manse* (1846). In

Brook
Farm.

* See pp. 172-173, *supra*.

† *American Note-Book* (June 1, 1841).

‡ See p. 168, *supra*.

the same year he was forced to leave his paradise, as he playfully called it, by an appointment to a post in the custom-house at Salem. Brought thus sharply into daily contact with that practical and business side of life from which he was by nature so much apart, Hawthorne, as he tells us, set himself to gather what profit was to be had from it.* He was in no mood for writing during the three years he held this place, but it was during this time that his great romance *The Scarlet Letter* took shape in his mind. It was not until he was removed from office by one of those changes which are a blot on our politics that he was able to carry out the idea over which he had been brooding. The publication of *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850 showed that Hawthorne had reached a new stage in his career. The first of his longer romances, it proved his ability to take a theme similar to those in many of his short studies, and successfully handle it on a larger scale. *The Scarlet Letter* was followed by *The House of the Seven Gables* (1851) and the *Blithedale Romance* (1852). These, with *The Marble Faun* (1860), are his four great romances.

In 1853 Hawthorne was appointed Consul at Liverpool by President Pierce, formerly his classmate at college. During the four years he held this position he published nothing. Released from his consular duties, he spent three years travelling in France, Italy, and part of England. Some of the results of these seven years of European experience are embodied in Haw-

* "The Custom-house," Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*.

thorne's later works, the English, French, and Italian Note-Books, and *The Marble Faun*, a story the majestic background of which is Rome, with its weight of memories, its ruins, its art, and its past.

Hawthorne returned home in 1860. For a time he worked vigorously, but before long it became evident that his strength was failing. It is pathetic to remember that the theme of his last romance, which he did not live to finish, was the elixir of life, the magic draught by which man's days on earth might be perpetually prolonged. He died May 19, 1864.

One of the first facts to impress us in a general survey of Hawthorne's work is its unmistakable originality. Among American writers there are a few who

resemble him, but none who really contest Hawthorne's his supremacy in that shadowy region he work.

has made so peculiarly his own. In all English literature we can hardly recall a single prose-writer, with the possible exception of Thomas De Quincey, whose work shows any similarity of tone. Probably Hawthorne has most in common with certain romance-writers of Germany, but in the literature of the English language he stands practically alone. The peculiar quality which thus sets Hawthorne's work apart must be felt, for no analysis can adequately explain that positive but undefinable impression which his romances produce. It may be said in general, however, that it is due partly to the originality of his aim, and partly to the refined beauty and subtle suggestiveness of his style. Unlike most writers of fiction, Hawthorne's chief object is

not to depict a certain phase of life in its external aspect, or even to present to us certain characters: it is rather to study the working of certain spiritual elements or forces in human life by showing us their operations in a given case. His interest centers in some moral problem or some spiritual truth, and he tells his story or creates his characters so as to study the problem or illustrate the truth. Sin, for example, is a constant element back of human life and action, and two of his greatest romances are minute and contrasted studies of the nature and workings of this terrible force. In the first of them, *The Scarlet Letter*, he traces the effects of sin on a group of characters—the effect on one soul of a sin discovered and punished, the effect on another of a sin concealed. He shows its noxious effect, not only on the original transgressors, but on the souls of others. On the one hand it awakens an unholy passion for revenge, and transforms a man into a fiend; on the other, as an inheritance by that law which visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, it is mysteriously mingled with the nature of a child.

The second of these books, *The Marble Faun*, raises the old question of the reason for sin's very existence. Roger Chillingworth in *The Scarlet Letter* was utterly corrupted by sin, but Donatello in *The Marble Faun*, sinning not deliberately but impulsively, attained through remorse and repentance a deeper and fuller life so,—as in Eden,—sin destroys the primitive innocence but brings knowledge. Is sin, then, permitted as a means of growth? The question

is asked but not answered. Now these two books are admirable examples of Hawthorne's aim and method. In each the result is not a sermon, but a work of art, for the moral problem is not crudely stated, but diffused throughout the whole substance of the work; yet so completely does this spiritual element pervade Hawthorne's work that we feel ourselves transported in his romances to a world which is somehow unfamiliar. It is like a familiar landscape metamorphosed at the touch of moonlight, filled with unaccustomed lights and shadows, and vague with things but dimly seen. While, as in *The Scarlet Letter*, the forms of the grim-visaged Puritans move before us with their "steeple-crowned hats and sad-colored garments," they seem but as phantoms to us beside our haunting sense that the true reality is the spiritual and the unseen. Men and women, their joys and sorrows, are thus comparatively unreal to us in Hawthorne, because he so constantly regards the visible and external as a symbol or a manifestation of the obscure world of thought and spirit. Hawthorne may consequently be regarded as the master of a kind of romantic allegory. Spenser in his *Faërie Queene* made his knights and ladies represent or personify the various virtues and vices, but Hawthorne works more subtly than this. He does not embody any sin or any temptation in a human shape, but reveals it as a purely spiritual energy acting through and in the lives and souls of men. Thus the ideal temper which distinguished Emerson distinguished Hawthorne also; but in the one it was expressed through philosophy, in the

other it put on the glorified garment of art. "The idealist," wrote Emerson, "speaking of events, sees them as spirits." Such an idealist was Hawthorne, the voice of the deepened life of New England, and perhaps the greatest writer that we have yet given to the literature of the world.

STUDY LIST

HAWTHORNE

1. **Sketches.**—"The Old Manse," "Birds and Bird-Voices," in *Mosses from an Old Manse*; "Sunday at Home," "A Rill from the Town Pump," "Sights from a Steeple," in *Twice-told Tales*.

2. **Short Stories.**—"Legends of the Province House," "The Gray Champion," "The May-pole of Merry Mount," "Endicott and the Red Cross," "The Minister's Black Veil," "The Gentle Boy," "Wakefield," "The Great Carbuncle," "David Swan," "The Ambitious Guest," in *Twice-told Tales*; "The Birthmark," "Rappaccini's Daughter," in *Mosses from an Old Manse*; "The Snow Image" and "The Great Stone Face," in *The Snow Image and other Twice-told Tales*.

3. *A Wonder Book*; *Tanglewood Tales*.

4. *The Scarlet Letter*; *The Marble Faun*.

5. **Biography and Criticism.**—*Nathaniel Hawthorne and His Wife*, by Julian Hawthorne (2 vols.); *A Study of Hawthorne*, by G. P. Lathrop; *Life of*, by Henry James, in *English Men of Letters Series*; *Life*, by G. E. Woodberry, in *American Men of Letters Series*; see also Curtis's *Social and Literary Essays*; *Stephen's Hours in a Library*, First Series; Hutton's *Essays in Literary Criticism*; Whipple's *Character and Characteristic Men*; G. B. Smith's *Poets and Novelists*; A. Symons, in *Studies in Prose and Verse*; Bliss Perry, in "Centenary of Hawthorne," in *Park Street Papers*.

OTHER WRITERS OF THE NEW ENGLAND GROUP

So far we have confined our attention to three of the representative writers of the New England group. But if we would appreciate the magnitude and importance of this great period of New England literature, we must look at it also as a whole; we must try to gain some conception of the large number of distinguished writers connected with it, and of the extent and variety of their work. It is remarkable to consider how little America had done in certain branches of literature when this period opened, and how much it had accomplished through the labors of these writers before it closed.

Besides the three writers already studied, the period gave us three who are justly grouped with them: James Russell Lowell, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and John Greenleaf Whittier. Before it, while we had produced respectable chroniclers or writers of biographies, we had done almost nothing in the higher branches of historical writing. The period gave us four of our most eminent historians: Prescott, Motley, Bancroft, and Parkman. Among many other scholars and literary critics we may mention Ticknor, the historian of Spanish literature; the essayists E. P. Whipple and Henry Tuckerman; the Greek scholar Felton; the profound student of English, Francis J. Child, editor of the Scotch and English Ballads; and Charles Eliot Norton, the Dante scholar and the critic of Art. Prominent among the older men of this group is that strange, shy haunter of the woods, Henry D.

Thoreau; ill at ease in the midst of conventionalities and at home in the wilderness, the preacher of a simpler and more unfettered life. There, too, were men of a yet broader and nobler type: George Ripley, the devoted laborer at Brook Farm; and George William Curtis, the patriot, orator, and man of letters. Indeed we must not think of this movement as purely literary; its foundations were laid in character, and it was strong on its moral and political sides. Mrs. Stowe's terrible picture of slavery in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and the eloquence of the abolitionist orators, Wendell Phillips and William Lloyd Garrison, did a great work in helping to arouse the nation's conscience. These are but some of the great names which might be mentioned; one writer crowded after another, until with the deaths of Edward Everett Hale (1909), and Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1911), this great age came virtually to an end.

If we are inclined to wonder at the power thus suddenly put forth, we must remember that besides the especial causes already alluded to there lay back of the whole movement the shrewd sense, the spiritual vision, the sound manhood, and the moral impetus of a great race. So it is that this time of awakening life comes to the bleak region of New England like the coming of spring. Warm airs heavy with the odors of some Southern land blow softly over her rocky fields, and the grass is starred with flowers; warm suns thaw the ice of her frozen streams, and the waters are poured out in a flood.

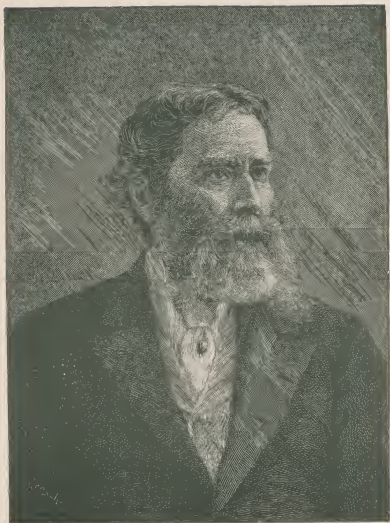
The time is too full of activity, the literature too abundant, for us to be able here to do more than select

a few of the eminent writers worthy of study, and speak of them only with comparative briefness.

JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL (1819-1891) holds among the rest a position which is both lofty and distinctive.

James Rus-
sell Lowell.

Like so many of his great contemporaries, he came of a family which had been associated with the higher side of New England life since the early days of the Colony. Among his ancestors were clergymen, judges, and men eminent for their practical ability and public spirit. His father, a minister of a church in Boston, was a man of sterling worth and energy, and Lowell, like Longfellow, grew up in the midst of cultured surroundings, enlarged by a free access to the best books. Nor were books the only influence about him; the present as well as the past was alive with inspiration, for New England was pressing forward under the spur of new ideas. Lowell graduated from Harvard in 1838. Five years before this William Lloyd Garrison had definitely begun the agitation for the immediate freeing of the slave by the establishment of his abolitionist paper, the *Liberator*. Two years before Lowell's graduation, Emerson had become the center of the transcendentalists by the publication of *Nature*. Thus when the future poet of the *Biglow Papers* came to manhood the Northern conscience was aroused and the Northern intellect quickened to an intenser life by its enthusiasm for the thought of new teachers. By nature Lowell was dreamy and poetic, and an ardent lover of beauty, but he had in him a vast reserve of strength. He had the keen humor, the shrewd obser-



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

vation and practical sense, the capacity for righteous indignation and patriotic devotion, which fitted him to be the champion of a great cause. In the first flush of his generous and high-souled youth, when a strong nation was rousing herself to face a coming crisis, Lowell's nature gained a manly force and earnestness in this uplifting and invigorating air. The growth of his character under these influences is reflected in his earlier poems. Studies of different types of women, comparable to certain early efforts of Tennyson, give place to poems of a stronger and sterner strain. We have indeed the excellent but somewhat imitative treatment of Old World themes, the poems on classical subjects such as *Rhæcus*, or *The Shepherd of King Admetus*; the mediæval *Legend of Brittany*, the softened beauty of which recalls the languorous atmosphere of Keats; but we have also the expression of a deep conviction that the poet of our new land must be the poet of freedom and human brotherhood, that he must put aside the properties of "silken bards," and speak his new message in the power of his manhood.

"Our country hath a gospel of her own
To preach and practice before all the world—
The freedom and divinity of man."

Few Americans have felt so deeply as Lowell the true ideal of our democracy. He not only loved our country for what it was; he saw its faults, and yet rose to the high conception of what it might be in the history of mankind. It is the strength of his moral fiber and the noble ardor of his patriotism that gives his

verse its resonant and distinctive character. So in the midst of his classicism and mediævalism his *Stanzas on Freedom*, the first of his antislavery poems, ring out like the call of a trumpet.

“ They are slaves who fear to speak
For the fallen and the weak ;

* * * * *

They are slaves who dare not be
In the right with two or three.”

At a time when to be an Abolitionist was to invite ridicule and unpopularity, Lowell was one of those who dared to be in the right with a few. *The Present Crisis*, inspired by the question as to the introduction of slavery into Texas, then recently annexed to the United States, contains lines that sent a thrill through the manhood of the North. The young poet had come, like Childe Roland in Browning's poem, to the door of our Dark Tower of shame, and dauntlessly he set the “slug-horn to his lips” and blew his note of challenge. If the past is with the poets of the Old World, the future belongs peculiarly to the poets of the New, and *The Present Crisis* is aflame with the feeling that, as Emerson had declared, “to-day is a new day.”

“ New occasions teach new duties, Time makes ancient good
uncouth ;

They must upward still and onward who would keep abreast
of Truth.”

In such a strain there sounds the magnificent confidence, the indomitable resolution, of a young land ; it is the true voice of our America.

In 1846 the poems which made up the first series of Lowell's great satiric masterpiece. *The Biglow Papers*, began to appear in the *Boston Courier*. Up to this time Lowell had been the poet of love, beauty, and patriotism; his work had been full of a high seriousness; but in the *Biglow Papers* elements of his genius which had yet found no expression in his verse became suddenly apparent. The poems were inspired by our war with Mexico, which was believed to have been undertaken in order to gain new territory for the extension of slavery. They are written in the Yankee dialect, and are supposed to be the work of Hosea Biglow, "an up-country man, capable of district-school English," but in the habit of relapsing into his homely native speech when strongly moved. A pedantic Mr. Wilbur, the pastor of the First Church at Jaalam, is introduced under the guise of editor. Probably no one was more surprised than Lowell himself at the success of this novel experiment; he was surprised at the power of the weapon he had made, and when the slavery question reached its climax in civil war, a second series of Biglow Papers was added to the first.

Taken as a whole, the *Biglow Papers* form one of our most noteworthy contributions to literature. It is often said, and quite truly, that no other country but New England could have produced them. Hawthorne embodies the Puritan spirit; Lowell here brings us face to face with the every-day Yankee, in undeniable flesh and blood. Lowell loved the flavor of the common speech, and by a single effort he has

lifted the twang, the drawl, the quaint phrases of the down-east countryman, into literature. From this aspect the *Biglow Papers* are local; but they are much more—they are among our few distinctly national poems, more fully and truly American than *Hiawatha* or *The Courtship of Miles Standish*. While they represent New England, they also represent much that is best in the American people—the clear-sightedness, the shrewd humor, the essential rightness on great moral issues, which are deep-seated in our democracy. Lowell might have expressed the views advanced in the *Biglow Papers* in that scholarly phrase or that elevated verse which would have been his own natural medium, but he believed that the moral sense of the plain average American man was sound and true; and so, instead of speaking for himself individually, in his own way, he instinctively chose to speak as a plain man of the people, in homely, pithy phrase. Hence we have in the *Biglow Papers* not the scholar writing from his library, but the voice of the nation. As a work of art the poem holds a high and distinctly unique place among the satires of the language, differing widely in form and spirit from the satiric masterpieces of Dryden, Pope, Butler, or Byron. The mixture of humor and deadly earnest is a national trait, and the *Biglow Papers* differ from many English satires in mingling wit and absurdity with a genuine poetic beauty and a spirit of the intensest patriotism. There is a wide range from such incisive verses as *The Pious Editor's Creed* and *What Mr. Robinson Thinks* to that idyll of the farm-house

kitchen, *The Courtin'*, or the truth and beauty with which the New England landscape is made real to us in *Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line*, or *Hosea Biglow to the Editor of the Atlantic*. In all we recognize an element unfortunately rare in the pure and melodious strains of our American verse, the note of a masculine strength. When we add to the poems of patriotism already mentioned such masterpieces as *The Washers of the Shroud*, and the noble but more unequal *Commemoration Ode*, written at the close of the Civil War, we realize that Lowell is virtually the laureate of our Republic, the poetic voice of our national life and ideals.

We have so far spoken of Lowell as the poet of patriotism, but to pass over his poetry of a wholly different kind would be to give an entirely wrong conception of his work. He could be nobly strenuous or inimitably humorous; but he had also an intimate knowledge and deep love of nature, a tenderness and a delight in beauty, and this gentle and more dreamy side of his sensitive nature also uttered itself in his verse. So, with a rare delicacy of perception, Lowell could turn aside from the great present questions and, like his "musing organist," could "build a bridge from Dreamland for his lay." The poet of the *Biglow Papers* is thus the poet of *The Vision of Sir Launfal*, with the passionate nature poetry of its prelude; of the love-sonnets; of *The Dandelion*; of *In the Twilight*, perhaps the most subtle and beautiful of all the shorter poems. Reading such poems, we know that Lowell was able not only to "blow through bronze," but also to "breathe through silver"; yet,

filled as they are with the poetic spirit, we feel at times that the poet has not fully mastered the secret of his art. His life was crowded with many interests; he did not consecrate himself to poetry with the exclusive devotion of Tennyson; and his work has an inequality absent from the art of that great master. We are often disturbed by a false or jarring note, and miss at times the magical phrase. Yet Lowell was a genuine poet, and we see this in the advance he makes in the sweetness and perfection of his work. To the end we see him gaining greater finish and delicacy, and some of his most perfect if not his strongest poems are among his last.

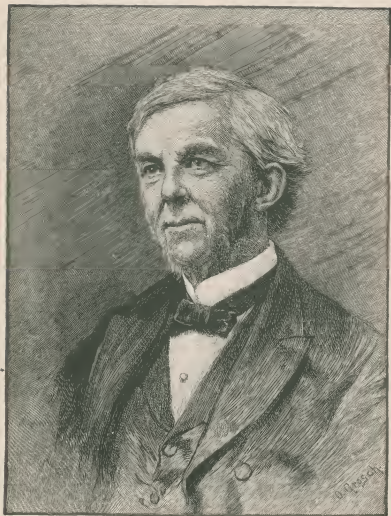
Lowell began his work as a poet, but from the first he had been a wide reader, absorbing books with the scholar's enthusiasm and the poet's sympathy and insight. As he approached middle age this scholarly side of his mind began to find more direct expression. In 1854 he delivered a course of lectures on the British Poets at the Lowell Institute, and in the year following was appointed to succeed Longfellow in the chair of Modern Languages and Literature at Harvard. After preparing himself, as Longfellow had done, by a foreign trip, he entered on the duties of his professorship in 1857. The twenty years of college work which followed were years of intense and loving toil. George William Curtis tells us that in these years Lowell sometimes studied fourteen hours in the day, so "relentless" was his devotion to study. This period of scholarship is notable for Lowell's work as

prose-writer and literary critic, and the best results of his studies and his university work were condensed into essays which are the finest addition America has yet made to the literature of criticism. Like his verse, Lowell's prose is alive with a characteristic audacity and variety; there is no even and colorless excellence. The essays are filled with an intense individuality. All is poured out in profusion—the irrepressible daring humor, the wealth of learning, the quaint memorable phrase, the homely telling allusion; and in all there is vigor, freshness, and unconventionality. He has explored the whole range of English literature, and brought many of its greatest masters nearer to our sympathy and understanding. He delights to give us, as in the monumental essay on *Dante*, the fruit of years of loving toil. In Lowell's prose there is a delightful sense of ease and power; lacking a classic finish, it has a warm humanity, and it often reaches a grace and felicity of manner that is the delight of lovers of style. Lowell's literary criticism is the more remarkable because America has been and is singularly deficient in this branch of literature. England has had dozens of capable critics during the last half-century, while among us Lowell stands almost alone,—“the only critic of high rank,” as one writer asserts, “that our literature owns.” During the twenty years of his professorship at Harvard, Lowell was one of the founders and, for the first five years, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*, and later one of the joint editors of the *North American Review*. These

two periodicals have had a most important part in our literary development.

Lowell was not only poet, scholar, and critic, but back of all his varied interests he was the patriot, the wise, large-hearted citizen; and in this more than anything else we find the basis of his life and work. In the fullness of his splendid powers he was called upon to represent his country. He was first Minister to Spain and then to England, being sent to Madrid in 1877 and transferred to London in 1880. His residence in England was far more than a great social triumph. His charm, wit, tact, and learning made him everywhere liked and honored. He came, as he said, as a distant cousin, but went back as a brother. He was in demand as the chosen orator on great public occasions; he made the aptest of after-dinner speeches. But through all this, pleasant as it was in itself, he accomplished a great purpose never lost sight of: he changed and raised the English idea of America, and brought the two greatest English-speaking countries nearer together. In these later years of his life he was conspicuously the public servant; many of his speeches are more or less occupied with political themes, and many of his matured opinions are summed up in his address on *Democracy* in 1884.

Lowell was our strongest if not our best poet, our greatest critic, and one of our greatest scholars. Through his many-sidedness he is our most representative man of letters, the true dean of the faculty. We admire him for all these things, but we admire him even more for that greatness of character which was



OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

the basis of them all. "We value character," says Lowell himself, "more than any amount of talent."* So while it is much that Lowell should so fitly represent American letters, it is yet more that in himself he should represent and stand for American manhood; a shining example for us who come after, a demonstration that our democracy with all its shortcomings has yet the force to be the maker of men.

Another notable member of this Cambridge group, the last to leave us of all the greater New England writers, was OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES Oliver
Wendell
Holmes. (1809-1894). Versatile as he was, physician, poet, lecturer, novelist, and "autocrat" of that immortal "breakfast-table," the distinctive share which Holmes took in his epoch is unmistakable almost from the first. Passing to Holmes from Emerson, Hawthorne, or Lowell, we are aware that he is of a slighter intellectual build; that his especial faculty is not so much depth or power, as an inimitable lightness, deftness, and grace. In a word, while he is many other things, he is pre-eminently the humorist, the kindly, keen-witted, fun-loving spirit, whose audacious flashes of merriment startled the solemn gloom that had so long hung heavily over New England. We have grown to look upon humor as one of our most distinguishing national traits, and as fellow-countrymen of Josh Billings and Mark Twain we regard it as a dominant element in our literature. But up to the advent of Holmes our higher literature

* Essay on Rousseau.

had, with the exception of Irving, been uniformly serious. It would, of course, be little short of impious to look for levity in the New England of Michael Wigglesworth and Jonathan Edwards, but even outside of Puritanic limits our authors who wrote best seldom smiled. As Mr. George William Curtis expresses it, "the rollicking laughter of Knickerbocker was a solitary sound in the American air until the blithe carol of Holmes returned a kindred spell."* Yet the spell that Holmes' keen wit exercises over us, while perhaps akin to that which charms us in the rich humor of Irving, is far from being absolutely the same. The pages of Irving are luminous with a softer, warmer glow, while those of the New Englander, while not untouched by pathos, sparkle with a sharper and colder light. In this, as in all things, Holmes was the true child of the great section which produced him, and, like so many of his contemporaries, he shows at almost every point the force and persistence of those traits which went to the making of New England. He exemplifies in himself the truth of his own doctrine of the strength of inherited influences. The blood of some of the best and oldest families of New England, the Wendells, the Olivers, the Quincys, ran in his veins. Among his ancestors was that fluent poetess Mistress Anne Bradstreet, "The Tenth Muse."

Thus Holmes was indeed the son of New England, but in a yet stricter and more especial sense he was the child of that exclusive culture focussed in and

* *Literary and Social Essays*, p. 218.

about Boston. Born almost under the shadow of Harvard, in the days when Cambridge was a quiet country village, he received his collegiate and his early medical training at that great university. Early associations and friendships had a lasting power over him; his attachments were broad and deep-rooted. After spending some years abroad in order to continue his medical studies at Paris and Edinburgh, he returned to Boston, becoming henceforth, except for a few brief intervals, a fixed and notable part of the city's social and intellectual life. As a college boy he had been the class poet; as a man he was peculiarly the "laureate of Harvard" and of Boston. Year after year he celebrated the reunions of his class in his witty, unfailing verse, and one of his latest poems was occasioned by the introduction of the trolley-cars into his beloved town. With that town everything combined to inseparably associate him; he was a part of its life by his affectionate hold on its past, by those gifts of wit, kindliness, and personal charm which made him so long its pride and ornament. And as Walter Scott loved Edinburgh, as Dr. Johnson or Charles Lamb or Dickens loved London, so Dr. Holmes loved Boston, and that placid suburb where his life began. Few authors have put more of their personality into their writings. Whether he wrote prose or verse, medical lectures, or "medicated novels," the result in any case was but an overflow of the man himself. For a generation he was one of Boston's cherished talkers, and in his works he simply indefinitely enlarges his audience and talks in print. His best and

most characteristic work in prose, *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, and its successors, consist of snatches of fragmentary conversations and reflections, in which the chief talker is readily identified with the author himself.

Holmes first won fame as a poet. As a very young man he wrote his spirited verses *Old Ironsides*, a ringing protest against the proposed breaking up of the veteran war-frigate the Constitution, a ship which had borne an honorable part in the War of 1812. The appeal went straight to the people's heart; it was taken up throughout the country, and laid the foundation of the poet's reputation. In 1836, the year of the appearance of Emerson's *Nature*, Holmes read a longer and more ambitious composition, *Poetry, a Metrical Essay*, before the Phi Beta Kappa Society. In this same year he published his first volume of poems, which included *The Last Leaf*, *The Treadmill Song*, and other familiar pieces. Holmes' muse, if not often very lofty, was always surprisingly prompt and available. A fluent versifier, with an easy, agreeable flow of meter, with wit, good-fellowship, and enough real feeling to serve as a corrective, he became incomparably the best and the most popular of our writers of poems for especial occasions. It is said that forty-seven per cent of his poems were thus written, as it were, to order, in honor of the most various celebrations. The dedication of a cemetery, or a State dinner; the meeting of a medical association, or the anniversary of an agricultural society; centennial and semi-centennial celebrations, and a long succession of

class-reunions,—on all such occasions Holmes showed his happy gift of putting into verse the fitting words. A greater poet might perhaps have done it less easily, but for the occasion Holmes did it inimitably well.

If, however, we look at Holmes' total poetic work, we shall probably conclude that his final place among our poets is likely to rest upon a very few poems. Light, graceful, humorous, or absurd, he is distinctly a minor poet, accepting his limitations, and apparently claiming for himself no higher title. Once, in *The Chambered Nautilus*, he rises into the larger, nobler air; it is doubtful whether he has elsewhere reached an equal height. But it is not given to all poets to be in the "grand manner," and the especial place and value of the less lofty singers should not be slighted or overlooked. The masters of the slighter forms of society verse,—of the lyric of wit, fun, or fancy,—have their assured place, even if it be on the outskirts of the poetic realm. We cannot be always at the highest tension, and, as Holmes himself says,

"A page of Hood may do a fellow good
After a scolding from Carlyle or Ruskin."

By certain poems—not many, indeed, but memorable—Holmes holds an assured place among verse-writers of this lighter kind. *Dorothy Q.*, which has a fineness and pathos not incomparable to that of Austin Dobson; *The One-Hoss Shay*, *La Grisette*, *The Last Leaf*,—such verse rightly entitles Holmes to be ranked in that charming company to which Prior, Hood, Praed, and Thackeray belong.

Holmes was nearly fifty before he made any important contribution to prose. When the *Atlantic Monthly* was started, in 1857, Lowell assumed its editorship with the understanding that a set of articles should be contributed by Holmes. Lowell's foresight was amply justified. The arrangement gave us *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table*, a book which placed Holmes among our most brilliant and charming writers of prose. By a guiding instinct, or a happy accident, Boston's famous talker had here hit upon—or perhaps we may rather say created—a literary form which showed his mastery in his own domain. The book purports to be the record of the table-talk of a Boston boarding-house. It is indeed less a conversation than a monologue in a dramatic setting; variety, humor, and human interest being furnished by the casual introduction of the various boarders, whose remarks or questions serve to bring out the Autocrat's best wit and wisdom. Such a plan allows the author the widest liberty; we have at once a greater ease and discursiveness than in the more formal essay, and at the same time an underlying connection not found in the scattered thoughts or meditations of certain great classic writers. *The Autocrat of the Breakfast-Table* was followed from time to time by other works of the same general character: *The Professor at the Breakfast-Table* (1859), *The Poet at the Breakfast-Table* (1873), and *Over the Tea-Cups* (1890). The series is full of Dr. Holmes; it reveals his alert, restless intellect, darting from grave to gay,

Holmes'
prose.

touching and adorning all with liveliness and sympathy.

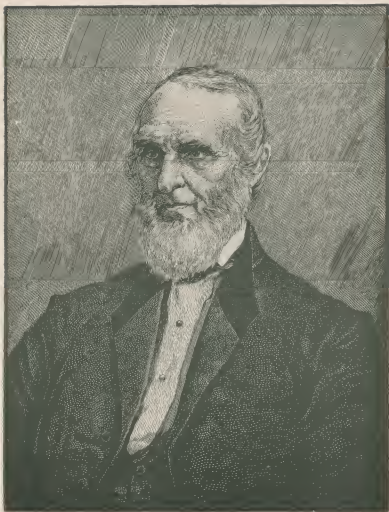
The same rambling and conversational quality which in the Breakfast-Table Series is so great a merit, detracts from the entire success of Dr. Holmes' novels, as it tends to interrupt the story and unduly obtrudes the personality and opinions of the author. His three novels, *Elsie Venner* (1860), *The Guardian Angel* (1868), and *A Mortal Antipathy* (1885), contain interesting presentations of character, striking situations, and an abundance of shrewd reflection, but they are rather the curious studies of the physician and thinker than masterpieces of story-telling. Each of them is a minute inquiry into the effect of some innate or hereditary influence on human character and action. It is suggested in *Elsie Venner* that in some cases a purely physical condition for which the individual cannot be held morally responsible may be the cause of a moral defect, and the two remaining stories turn also on this problem of moral accountability. It is dangerous, if fascinating, ground; it takes us into that debatable region where body and spirit touch and interact, and where we are led to ask how far the thing which we are and do is determined by the forces without or the personal power within. The fact that this subtle question should have attracted Holmes so strongly, is another illustration of his intensely New England cast of mind. His ancestors had approached the problem of evil tendencies or human accountability as theologians, and discovered predestination and original sin. The same deep problems fascinated Holmes,

but he approached them as a physician and a scientist, in the reactionary and modern spirit of his time.

Although we cannot dwell here on the work of Dr. Holmes in medicine, it must be remembered that he gave to this his chosen profession a great part of his energy. He made numerous and important contributions to medical literature; he was Professor of Physiology and Anatomy at Dartmouth College for two years, and held the same chair at Harvard for thirty-five years (1847-1882). It is enough to say here that even into his medical lectures he carried the genial, winning grace of that personality which, underlying all his varied activities and successes, gives its distinctive flavor to his work.

Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, and Holmes were inheritors of generations of scholarship. Europe was

J. G. open and familiar to them, and their wide
Whittier. culture gave them the key to the treasures of her literature and her past. In certain ways JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER (1807-1892) is closely associated with this group of poet-scholars, but, on the whole, he stands apart from it by his origin, his education, and the prevailing character of his work. As has been pointed out, Emerson, and the great writers who surrounded him were, for the most part, the outcome of Puritanism as then transformed and liberalized by the power of new ideas; Whittier, on the contrary, was a Quaker and sprung from Quaker stock. To the close of his life the "Quaker poet" held fast to the tranquil faith in which he had been reared, and the religious spirit of many of his poems is neither that of



JOHN GREENLEAF WHITTIER

Emerson nor of those Calvinistic teachers whose iron creed Emerson had cast off. By religion, by inheritance, and in some respects by temperament, Whittier is thus outside of Puritanism, that most dominant influence in the life and literature of New England.

A further point of separation is to be found in the character of Whittier's early life and surroundings. The lives of his great New England contemporaries in poetry were mainly identified with cities. They knew and loved nature, indeed, yet they habitually viewed life from the midst of the charmed circles of culture in Boston, Cambridge, or Concord. Whittier was country-born and country-bred. He grew up a simple New England farmer's boy, taking his share in the beautiful, homely labors of the barn-yard and the field. Emerson and his circle were college-bred; they belonged by birth to the "academic aristocracy" of New England. The meagerness of Whittier's early training at the country-school near by was supplemented by a year of hardly-earned instruction at a neighboring academy. His ancestors were a simple, upright, hard-working people, his boyish surroundings devoid of luxury or of any especial incentives to culture. Whittier is thus, in a peculiar sense, the poet of the people and of nature. He comes to us out of the very heart of rural New England. To the farmer, nature is not merely an occasional source of pleasure; he lives in daily dependence upon her, brought by his calling into direct and wholesome dealings with her processes of growth. Born to farm labors, the knowledge of nature was Whittier's birthright, and not even

Lowell with all his subtler sympathies can bring us so close to the New England landscape, or make the life of the New England farmer so idyllic and so real.

The Whittier homestead, pictured for us by the poet in *Snow-Bound*, stood in the valley of the Merrimack River, in the northern part of Essex County, Massachusetts. In this plain New England farmhouse the family had dwelt for generations. The situation is remote and solitary; the hills shut it in, their wooded slopes "ridging" the west. Here Whittier was born, December 17, 1807. The poet in him woke early, and as a boy he found help and inspiration in the songs of that greater genius of the farm, Robert Burns. The Scotch ploughman spoke to the heart of the New England farmer's boy, and, as Whittier declared, he saw the world with new eyes:

"New light on home-seen Nature beamed,
New glory over Woman;
And daily life and duty seemed
No longer poor and common.*

When he was about twenty, through the influence and encouragement of William Lloyd Garrison, then at the beginning of his career, Whittier left the farm to make journalism his profession. For the next twelve years (1828-1840) his duties called him to various places: for a time he was in Boston, then in Haverhill, then in Hartford, and later in Philadelphia. His early association with Garrison, his love of freedom, and his deep hatred of cruelty and oppres-

* Whittier's Poems: "Burns."

sion, all combined to make him the indomitable opponent of slavery, and he stands side by side with Lowell as the poet champion of the cause of the Abolitionists. With his gentle, loving, and sensitive nature, Whittier, like Lowell, had that power of just wrath possible to men of a pure and lofty type. Mingled with that peculiar twilight serenity so characteristic of those of the Quaker sect, there was a stern zeal for righteousness like that in the great Hebrew prophets, a martial dash and vigor that passes into the swinging beat of many of his best ballads, and sets our blood astir. Thoroughly in earnest, Whittier gave not only his songs but himself to the antislavery cause. He was one of the secretaries of the antislavery convention; he edited *The Pennsylvania Freeman*, faced hostile audiences, confronted riotous and abusive mobs, in the strength of his conviction and his cause.

Leaving Philadelphia in 1840, Whittier sold the homestead on the Merrimack, and settled at Amesbury, a small town in its vicinity. Here and in his beautiful country-place near Danvers, yet far from Boston, he spent the long remainder of his life. Thus, except for the brief interval of his journalistic work, made stirring and eventful towards its close by his gallant battle for the slave, Whittier's life was passed in those country surroundings which give to his verse so much of its freshness and charm.

The course of Whittier's life is accurately reflected in his poetry. Burns had led him to see a hitherto unsuspected beauty in familiar surroundings. He

sought as a youth to convert the Indian into a hero of romance, and to claim for poetry the scenes and legends of New England. At first the result was but very partially successful, and he himself declared in after years that Mogg Megone, the hero of one of these early efforts, suggested "the idea of a big Indian in his war-paint strutting about in Sir Walter Scott's plaid."* Another Indian poem, *The Bridal of Pen-nacook*, is less of a failure, but hardly a success. If Whittier cannot compete with Longfellow in his treatment of Indian legend, he has found in the records of the early settlers of New England materials for ballads which at least compare favorably with Longfellow's best work on similar themes. Among such poems are the splendid ballad *Cassandra Southwick*, and the story of the days of witchcraft, *Mabel Martin*. Spirited and admirable as are these studies of the past, Whittier is above all the painter and revealer of his own time. He stands out pre-eminently as the poet of the antislavery contest, the poet of rural New England, and the poet of a tranquil and comprehensive religious faith. We will speak briefly of these three elements in his work.

Regarded strictly as poetry, many of Whittier's antislavery lyrics fall below the level of his best verse. They show earnestness, sincerity, and vigor; but Whittier was slow in mastering the technical requirements of his art, and these poems, often written for an occasion and in the heat of the conflict, were in-

* Collected Works, ed. 1888, vol. ii. p. 325.

tended to serve a practical and immediate purpose. Fame could wait; his cause could not, and it was more than fame. So Whittier simply used verse as another weapon in the fight he was waging; in his antislavery verses, widely read through the newspapers, he spoke directly to the hearts of the people, and he did his work. Nevertheless the effectiveness of these poems in a great national crisis is one thing, and their permanent value in poetry another; and from the latter aspect we often find in them a genuine but too declamatory passion, rather than an enduring poetic form. They have, moreover, that diffuseness which is admittedly one of Whittier's most serious artistic shortcomings. Yet once, at least, in these poems Whittier reached a height to which the best of our poets seldom attain. Among the mass of prose and poetry produced by our Civil War, the *Laus Deo*, a song of praise and triumph for the abolition of slavery, must rank with the few really great and lasting contributions to literature. Through all its exultant lyrical movement we feel the throb of the great bells; it is alike a song of victory and of thanksgiving, and like that ancient chant of Miriam, it is a perfect union of those two great emotions, patriotism and praise.

“ It is done !

Clang of bell, and war of gun,
Send the tidings up and down.

How the belfries rock and reel !

How the great guns, peal on peal !
Fling the joy from town to town.”

The antislavery poems were an episode, if a dramatic and important one, in Whittier's career; his poems which record the New England farm-life came out of a lifetime of association and an intimate understanding and sympathy. Whittier's intense feeling for New England may be compared to that filial devotion to country which permeates the work of Scott or Burns. Other countries may be fair, but the poet with this deep feeling for the land of his birth knows that one only can satisfy his needs. We know that Whittier spoke in all sincerity when he wrote of his bleak New England:

"Home of my heart! to me more fair
Than gay Versailles or Windsor's halls,
The painted, shingly town-house where
The freeman's vote for Freedom falls."*

It is this intimate knowledge and lifelong love of New England that has made Whittier in an especial sense her poet. He sets us down in the midst of her, and we see, as for the first time, that life of the New Englander glorified and yet startlingly real. Thus in the *Barefoot Boy* he shows us the careless ranger of the fields, with his sunburned face and torn hat-brim; there is the country schoolhouse, the sumach and blackberry vines about it, and within the warped floor and battered seats. Then in *Telling the Bees*, one of the most perfect and suggestive of the shorter poems, there is the quaint local custom, touched by a

* *The Last Walk in Autumn*, xxi.

universal pathos against the homely but beautiful background of the farm-house.

“This is the house, with the gate red-barred
And the poplars tall;
And the barn’s brown length, and the cattle-yard,
And the white horns tossing above the wall.”

To describe such scenes both truthfully and poetically requires power of no mean order, and to this power Whittier added sympathy with the lives of those who toil. In the series entitled *The Songs of Labor* we are made to feel the dignity and nobility of man’s toil, when “the working hand makes strong the working brain.” The lives of the fishermen of the stormy northern coasts, of the lumbermen in the wintry solitude of a Maine forest, are entered into with a democratic spirit meant to show “the unsung beauty” underlying “common things.” The most perfect expression of all this side of Whittier’s genius is probably to be found in *Snow-Bound*. The poem comes to us with the directness of a personal experience; it is an actual part of life, and thus built on solid and enduring foundations. Only one household is brought before us, but we feel that in portraying this, one side of our American life has been given a lasting interpretation in literature. The genius of Whittier has lifted the New England farmhouse in winter into the great world of poetry, as the genius of Burns did the humble, godly home of the Scotch cotter, or that of Cowper the domestic comforts of an English fireside. We share in the “nightly chores,”

the morning task of cutting a path through the snow-drift; we see the "prisoned brutes" in the barn; at night we pass indoors and join the little group about the blazing fireplace. All is real and true; every detail is brought before us with a loving sureness of touch which reminds us of the painstaking minuteness of some old Dutch painter. Without stretches the New England landscape, bleak, snow-covered, solitary; the wind sweeps over it and we hear the sleet with its "ghostly finger-tips" tap the pane. It is a veritable idyll; and it is as distinctly ours as an idyll of Theocritus is Greek, or as Tennyson's idyllic poems of English country life are English. It is at once true in every familiar incident and particular, and yet filled with that grace and meaning which the true poet teaches us to discern in familiar things.

Finally, we find in Whittier a deep and tranquil religious feeling, finding definite expression in one important group of poems, but passing beyond this, and pervading more or less fully the whole body of his work. This religious spirit is at the farthest remove from the gloom and severity of the Calvinistic creeds; it is a spirit of peace, light, love, and childlike trust. Not unmindful of the questionings of his age, this confidence suffices the poet until the end.

"I have no answer for myself or thee,
Save that I learned beside my mother's knee;
'All is of God that is and is to be;
And God is good.' " *

* Whittier's Poems. "Trust."

It is this spirit of trust that illuminates with a serene radiance that most finished and beautiful poem, *The Eternal Goodness*. On the purely artistic side Whittier had many technical shortcomings. His instinct for form was not always fine enough to balance the deficiencies of his early training, and the preacher and reformer in him sometimes injured the poet. On the other hand, he gained as he grew older a greater mastery of his art, and he has reached at times an extraordinary height of poetic excellence. In all cases we feel his sterling manhood, his singleness of purpose; and we should realize that after all deductions he has a genuineness, an elevation, and an original force which win for him a high place among our poets.

So far we have dwelt almost exclusively on the work produced by the great writers of New England, within the limits of poetry, romance, and literary criticism. But even a brief survey of the Golden Age of our literature would be incomplete without some mention of what has been accomplished in the fields of learning and scholarly research. In reality this work is of an exceedingly high order. In poetry and even in fiction, branches of literature which demand the highest creative or imaginative power, the work of the American writers, creditable as it is, is as a whole distinctly inferior to that of their English contemporaries. It is childish to allow our judgment in this matter to be warped by any fancied loyalty to country, for the truest patriotism lies in seeing clearly

The
Historians.

our national shortcomings and striving to amend them, not in blindly insisting that they do not exist. In the field of historical writing, however, no such admission is required, for the works of our best American historians are fairly entitled to be ranked with those of the greatest English historians of the time. The American mind is quick and versatile, but it has shown a truly surprising willingness to labor slowly and diligently in original investigation.*

In addition to thorough knowledge and accuracy, the great New England historians have not been wanting in a fine feeling for style and in a true literary instinct. One of these, **GEORGE BANCROFT** (1800-1891), had, indeed, the faculty of the historical investigator in larger measure than the faculty of the literary artist; yet his *History of the United States*, a monument of careful industry, remains, with all deductions, an invaluable and scholarly work. This history, in twelve volumes, the first of which appeared in 1834, covers the Colonial and Revolutionary periods, treating them with such fullness and exactness that it has taken its place as a standard authority.

George Bancroft. *Isabella*, was published three years after the first volume of Bancroft's history, possessed in a wonderful degree not only the

W. H. Prescott. *Isabella*, was published three years after the first volume of Bancroft's history, possessed in a wonderful degree not only the

*This has been so marked of late years as to attract the notice of one of the most acute of our English critics. Bryce's *American Commonwealth*, vol. ii. p. 631.

patient spirit necessary for careful and painstaking research, but also the imaginative power to present the dry facts thus discovered in a picturesque and delightful narrative. This was the more remarkable when we consider under what disadvantages he labored. When quite a young man an accident made him almost blind. After travelling abroad for two years, vainly seeking relief, he returned to America, and with the help of a secretary bravely began the work upon which he had set his heart. For the next twelve years he was occupied in writing the *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella*. This was followed (1843) by a *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, and four years later by the *Conquest of Peru*. After this he wrote three volumes of his *History of the Reign of Philip II.*, but he did not live to complete it.

Prescott, like Irving, had come under the fascination of Spain in the days of her greatest power, when she was laying the foundations of her empire beyond the seas. His selection of the Spanish conquest in South America as a subject was a particularly happy one; for, in addition to the fact that this great era of discovery possesses an especial interest for Americans, it was a theme which afforded a fine opportunity for graphic description. Few novels move us more deeply than Prescott's vivid story of the perilous escapes, the trials, the hardships, and the daring of this band of romantic adventurers, discovering and conquering a new world, gorgeous with the rich and brilliant coloring of tropical life, and filled with a

fabulous wealth and treasure long dreamed of by Old-World explorers. Prescott's work as a whole maintains a high order of excellence, but in this fascinating book the nature of his subject has enabled him to give us a peculiarly poetic and rounded production. The daring exploits of Cortes and his little band; the extraordinary richness of the kingdom they subdued, and the tragic fate of its unhappy ruler,—all these combine to give the story the unity and poetic quality of a great epic. Although, in the light of recent knowledge, critics have questioned some of Prescott's statements, his histories are, in nearly all essential points, to be relied upon as correct, and we may still take pleasure in the thought that, in the wonderful pictures he has given us, truth has not been sacrificed to effect.

Another great historian of this New England group, JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY (1814–1877), after graduating at Harvard studied for several years at the German universities. He then returned to Boston and chose law as his profession. Law was soon abandoned for literature, and in 1839 he published an unsuccessful novel, *Morton's Hope*. In his next venture he made use of some of the historical materials he had begun to collect; but this second novel, *Merry Mount*, while not devoid of merit, was like the first a literary failure, and Motley came to the conclusion that his vocation was that of the historian. Having made this decision, he did not hesitate in the selection of his subject. His view of history was essentially that of one who

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believed in free institutions and in popular rights. In looking back over the past his sympathy and interest went out to the great mass of people rather than to the little group of kings and nobles. For one of his temperament and convictions, the disregard of human rights, the cruelty and oppression of a tyrannical ruler, or a popular uprising in the cause of freedom possessed a peculiar attraction and an underlying significance. The struggle of the race towards liberty impressed him as a leading element in modern history, and he aspired to become, in part, its historian. As such he may be regarded as an exponent, from the historian's point of view, of those principles which are the foundation of our Republic.

The stubborn and successful struggle of the Dutch against the bigotry and tyranny of Philip II. was interesting in Motley's eyes, not merely because of its heroic or dramatic incident, nor wholly because it was a fight for liberty, but because, as he saw it, it was a step towards the wider establishment of human rights; an episode in the drama of progress, the full meaning of which had not been fully perceived. As he writes in his Preface: "To all who speak the English language the history of the great agony through which the Republic of Holland was ushered into life must have a peculiar interest, for it is a portion of the records of the Anglo-Saxon race—essentially the same, whether in Friesland, England, or Massachusetts." And again: "'To maintain,' not to overthrow, was the device of the Washington of

the sixteenth century, as it was the aim of our own hero and his great contemporaries." *

Motley planned a series of histories which, under the general title of *The Eighty Years' War for Liberty*, was to include *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*, *The United Netherlands*, and *The Thirty Years' War*. He did not live, however, to fully carry out his design. He soon realized that it was impossible to carry out his tremendous undertaking in this country, and in 1851 he went abroad with his family in order to investigate original manuscripts, and to visit the chief places connected with his work. The untiring labor which he expended for many years in the most minute and painstaking researches shows the earnest devotion of a great scholar. He not only read in different languages the greater part of the authorities which the best libraries had collected on his subject, but obtained permission from various governments to look into their private archives and state papers. He spent months over illegible, unpublished correspondences, and at one time he employed one secretary in London and kept two more busy at the Hague, while he himself was at work in Brussels. Many would have been appalled at the overwhelming mass of material thus brought to light, but Motley showed his judgment and critical faculty in the wise selection of what he most needed. Throughout all his work we find a broad grasp of the most important features of the subject, and the relation between the social and political conditions of a nation and its life at a given period is clearly brought out.

* Preface to *The Rise of the Dutch Republic*.



FRANCIS PARKMAN



JOHN LOTHROP MOTLEY

Motley's style, which suggests that of Carlyle, is notably vigorous and brilliant, and certain passages are filled with sarcastic humor. Prescott excelled in the orderly movement of his narrative, but Motley possessed a dramatic instinct which enabled him to seize upon some revealing situation and bring it vividly before us. This same dramatic power shows itself also in his delineation of character; certain figures stand out with life-like distinctness, and we can almost imagine ourselves alongside of those men and women of the past in whose company, Motley himself wrote, he was spending all his days.* When *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* was published in 1856, it was enthusiastically received, not only in his own country, but in England and on the Continent, where it was translated into three languages. *The United Netherlands* still further increased the reputation which Motley had gained by his first history, and it is indeed to be regretted that he should not have lived to complete the last of the great series he had planned.

If we have found that for various reasons the works of these three great historians are of especial interest to Americans, the subject chosen by FRANCIS PARKMAN (1823-1893), the last historian of this group, is no less deserving of their earnest attention; and the successful manner in which he has treated it has placed him in the front rank of our prose writers. Parkman seems to have definitely decided upon his life-work while still a student, for he determined then to devote himself

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Parkman.

* Holmes's *Memoir of Motley*, p. 69.

to the writing of history. Like Motley, he planned a great series which was to be united by one central idea. In Parkman's case this theme was the conflict between England and France for the possession of the New World. He realized how much depended upon the result of this momentous struggle; that the whole character of America's civilization was at stake at this critical period of her career. Filled with the enthusiasm of a great purpose, Parkman determined not only to make himself familiar with state papers and published authorities, but to live for a time among the Indians and make a study from life of their character and savage customs. In 1846 he went out west to the Black Hills of Dakota, and, joining a tribe of Sioux, suffered the hardships and privations of a wild life, for which he was physically unfitted.* He returned with invaluable material and a personal knowledge of the Indian which was of immense service to him in his work; but his health had become seriously impaired, and besides this drawback he had, like Prescott, to contend with partial blindness. When the difficulties under which these two men labored are taken into account we cannot but be impressed with their wonderful courage and perseverance, and look with increased admiration on their masterly productions. Parkman was a conscientious workman, and his style, while perhaps a trifle highly colored and ornate, is picturesque and full of descriptive power. The following titles of his principal works in their

* In *The Oregon Trail* (1847) we find thrilling accounts of these Western adventures.

historical sequence will indicate more definitely the scope of his undertaking: *Pioneers of France in the New World*; *The Jesuits in North America*; *La Salle, or the Discovery of the Great West*; *The Old Régime in Canada*; *Count Frontenac, or New France under Louis XIV.*; *A Half-Century of Conflict*; *Montcalm and Wolfe*; *The Conspiracy of Pontiac and the Indian War after the Conquest of Canada*.

The later history of our country seems often lacking in romance; but the period of which Parkman treats is touched with the glamour of chivalry, which stands out in sharp contrast against the broad background of the wilderness and the wild passions of aboriginal life.

The kindred arts of oratory and literature stand in a somewhat peculiar relation. The power of the orator and the power of the writer are similar but distinct. The great speaker, ^{The} ~~Orators.~~ holding his hearers, perhaps, by some quality of voice or some indefinable compulsion of manner, may say nothing which will stand the test of being read as literature; the great writer, on the other hand, able to stir the hearts of thousands by his printed words, if brought face to face with an audience may be incapable of holding the attention of a single hearer. But while the arts of oratory and of literary composition are thus distinct, many great orations outlast the occasion which produced them, and, even though no longer enhanced by the personal spell of the speaker, possess, independently of it, a durable quality which places them among the master-pieces of literature.

During her years of intellectual leadership New England led the country in oratory also, and the work of her succession of great orators belongs, at least in part, to literature. We have said that in the Revolutionary period and during the early days of the Republic the supremacy in oratory lay with the South. But as the present century advanced and the country passed into the shadow of those anxious years when slavery threatened the very existence of the Union, it was New England that gave America, in DANIEL WEBSTER (1782-1852), her greatest orator. It was New England also that gave us Edward Everett (1794-1865), the master of a finished and scholarly eloquence; Wendell Phillips (1811-1884), and Charles Sumner (1811-1874), the orators of the Abolitionists. It only increases our

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Webster.

admiration for the part that New England oratory played at this critical stage of our national history, to remember that Webster had formidable antagonists in John C. Calhoun and other orators of the South. Through Webster, New England forced home to the conscience of the nation the conviction that at all sacrifices the Union must be preserved. This conviction was the central note of Webster's career. He did not exaggerate when he said in the most celebrated of his political speeches, the *Reply to Hayne*: "I profess, sir, in my career hitherto, to have kept steadily in view the prosperity of the whole country and the preservation of our Federal Union. It is to that Union we owe our safety at home and our consideration and dignity

abroad. It is to that Union that we are chiefly indebted for whatever makes us most proud of our country." The effect of such words went far beyond the walls of the Senate; they even went beyond the generation to which Webster belonged. Such famous passages, included in countless schoolbooks, read and declaimed throughout the country by thousands of schoolboys, had an inestimable influence in moulding the opinions and determining the future actions of those that came after,—those whose part it was to maintain the Union when imperilled by the Civil War. Beginning life as a farmer's boy in New Hampshire, Webster's tremendous personal and intellectual force, joined to his phenomenal abilities as an orator, pushed him rapidly to the front. For thirty years he "stood at the head of the bar and of the Senate, the first lawyer and the first statesman of the United States."* He has been dead for nearly half a century, yet the personal power that was a part of the man has not ceased to impress us. Even Carlyle, the devout admirer of sheer strength in a man, felt this nameless force in Webster, and, in spite of a predisposition against anything American, has left his tribute to him on record. "As a logic fencer, advocate, or parliamentary Hercules," he writes, "one would incline to back him at first sight against all the extant world." And after describing the "amorphous crag-like face," and the "black eyes under those precipices of eyebrows," he concludes: "I have not traced as much of

* Lodge's *Life of Webster*. American Statesmen Series, p. 347.

silent Berserker-rage, that I remember of, in any other man." * Webster's speeches are more than triumphs of oratory. For us of a later generation the eloquence of his great southern contemporary Henry Clay (1777-1852), like that of Patrick Henry, is little more than a tradition; but the masterpieces of Webster, with their strength of thought, their marvellous keenness and clearness of argument, their command of language, and their strains of a sonorous and splendid rhetoric, have passed into our literature. Everett had the grace of a more perfect culture, Phillips and George William Curtis were noble and ardent speakers, but we can still feel the half-latent and almost incomparable personal force that lay behind Webster's words; the strength of an intellectual giant, so abundant that it seems never fully put forth. One other

and yet greater man, Abraham Lincoln, Webster and Lincoln. impresses us with this overwhelming sense of restrained power. We feel it back of his compact and strongly-built sentences, which, free from all affectations of rhetoric, and unimpeded by a superfluous word, go straight to the mark, and find their place in the heart and conscience of the nation.

As we look back upon the work of these great orators of New England as a whole, from Webster to Sumner and Phillips, as we recall its sterling quality and its incalculable effects upon our national history, we see that it was by no means the least important

* *Carlyle-and-Emerson Correspondence*. Edited by C. E. Norton, vol. i. p. 247. Carlyle also refers to Webster in the same volume, p. 19.

part of New England's service to the country at large. To all that the Puritan gave us we add this also. We appreciate that in those years of her full strength New England not only wrote our greatest poetry, our best histories, and our keenest political satire; that she not only charmed us with her humor, and led the way in scholarship, but that, beside all this, she gave us men who, in a time of national uncertainty and peril, could lead opinions and control events by their genius for speech.

GENERAL SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE OF THE NEW ENGLAND GROUP

Before finally taking leave of these New England writers, and passing to their contemporaries in the Southern and Middle States, it seems desirable to emphasize some of the thoughts suggested by their work as a whole.

The supremacy of New England as a literary center extended approximately from 1836 to 1870 or 1880. It is true that some of the greatest writers of the group entered the field before 1836, and that a number died between 1882 and 1892; it is true, furthermore, that Holmes, the last summoned, lingered until so late as 1895; nevertheless the dates above given fairly indicate the period when New England was the center of our best literary activity.

In the second place we observe that this supremacy of New England is more strictly the supremacy of Massachusetts. It is Massachusetts which produced almost all the eminent writers of the period, and in

Massachusetts, the great strongholds of the literature, Boston, Cambridge, and Concord, lie but a few miles apart. Longfellow, the son of Maine, is indeed a conspicuous exception; but even Longfellow is identified with Cambridge rather than with his native place. In reflecting upon this striking fact we cannot fail to be impressed with the important influence that the concentration of learning and culture at certain points exercises upon literary production. The success of the writer is largely dependent upon favorable conditions; ordinarily he needs the stimulus that comes from association with men of kindred tastes and ability; he is helped by a nearness to the great publishing-houses and magazines, and by the whole stir and movement of the intellectual and social life around him.

Boston afforded such conditions; Cambridge, emphatically a university town, brought together a chosen company of scholars; while Concord, not too distant from this center to make intercourse difficult, gave to the more shy and solitary spirits the charms of natural beauty and historic association.

In the third place we notice that this New England literature is not only produced almost entirely within the limits of a small district of the oldest of the New England Colonies, but that it is largely the work of those who represent by descent and inheritance the early Puritan settlers. The leaders in letters, Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, Holmes, Lowell, and many more, are men who traced their descent to the early days of the Colony; men sprung from the old

Puritan stock, with the blood of generations of scholars in their veins. Whether we like it or not, the fact remains that in New England the oldest and so-called "best" families, the families of pure English stock, have given us our greatest men of letters.

And we may mark in the fourth place the lofty and stainless lives of these poets and scholars of New England. There was a time in the history of English literature when the great majority of writers lived in alternate poverty and excess; there was a time when the gift of poetic genius was associated with a career of reckless dissipation and a miserable death; but in their purity, self-culture, and nobility these American men of letters set an example to the world. They have been excelled in the greatness of their genius, but no group of writers in the whole history of literature has surpassed them in the greatness and beauty of their lives. We Americans may think with just pride of Emerson's lofty serenity of spirit, of Lowell's well-balanced nature and sterling manhood, and of Longfellow, the gentle, loving scholar, wearing through all the allotted term of years "the white flower of a blameless life." As we regard the great writers of New England on this personal side, we see that the incorruptible Puritan stock from which they came was calculated to produce not merely men of powerful intellect, but men of marked uprightness and nobility of character.

Nor can we fail to notice that in these New England writers the angularity and roughness of the Puritan character have been smoothed and softened by

the grace and loveliness of foreign civilizations. The New Englanders of the earlier time were provincials, fenced off not only by their creed but by their condition from any direct knowledge of the world beyond the seas. But in the generation to which Emerson belonged we find a sudden change, the effects of which are immediate and far-reaching. With hardly a single exception, the great New Englanders of Emerson's time visited Europe, and the subtle influence of Europe is visibly at work in them, moulding their character, and coloring their thought, their writings, and their lives. Something has been said as to the effect of this direct contact with Europe on the writers of the Middle States. What has been said of the deep impress left on Irving by foreign travel applies with equal or perhaps even greater force to the men of New England. The old days of Colonial isolation were over; throughout all this period the increase in wealth and leisure, the growing delight in foreign scenes, and the astonishing improvements in the facilities for ocean travel were steadily bringing the New World into closer and more familiar relations with the Old. In itself this was enough to make a new era in our literature. No wonder that, in conjunction with many other causes, it made an era in the literature of New England. Think for a moment of some of its direct results. To cite only a few examples, it gave us Longfellow's *Outre-Mer* and *Hyperion*, as well as a large number of his poems; Lowell's *Cathedral*, Emerson's *English Traits*, Hawthorne's *Our Old Home*, and Holmes's *Our Hundred Days in Europe*.

In fiction it furnished inspiration and background for *The Marble Faun*, and in history it unlocked to Motley the stores of fresh material, and made the scenes of his narratives real and familiar to his mind.

But even beyond this direct effect of European travel upon our literature there lies its pervading and even more important influence on the lives and thoughts of the writers themselves. It goes deeper than that direct effect apparent in any particular works. Longfellow, Lowell, and Hawthorne were different men because they knew Europe. Its life had entered into theirs; they had grown by it, and it naturally became a part of the influence which they exerted on our cruder social and intellectual life.

Finally, we must remember that this literature of New England is, above all, the characteristic expression of that particular locality which produced it. It is neither national nor foreign in its essential spirit; it is New England. Much of it is as essentially distinct from the literature of the other sections of our country as the literature of Scotland is from that of England; and whatever it may have received from Europe, it remains Puritan at heart. To understand it, we must strive to enter into the spirit and traditions of New England, realizing at the same time that all the writings produced within this great section form but a chapter in the many-sided development of American literature as a whole.

ADDITIONAL STUDY LISTS AND REFERENCES FOR NEW ENGLAND WRITERS

Lowell.—1. *Poems*. "The Vision of Sir Launfal" (compare Tennyson's treatment of the same subject in the "Holy Grail"), "Commemoration Ode," "An Incident in a Railroad Car," "Stanzas on Freedom," "The Present Crisis," "To the Dandelion," "In the Twilight," "The First Snowfall," "The Rose: A Ballad," "The Washers of the Shroud," "The Optimist," "On the Capture of Fugitive Slaves near Washington," "At the Commencement Dinner," "A Fable for Critics"; and the following from the *Biglow Papers*: "What Mr. Robinson Thinks," "The Pious Editor's Creed," "The Courtin'," "Sunthin' in the Pastoral Line."

2. *Essays*.—"On a Certain Condescension in Foreigners," "Shakespeare Once More."

These essays are suggested simply as being suitable for the purpose. Where all are so excellent, selection is extremely difficult.

3. *Biography and Criticism*.—Lives, by H. E. Scudder, 2 vols.; and by Ferris Greenslet; see also E. E. Hale's *James Russell Lowell and His Friends*; T. W. Higginson's "Lowell," in *Old Cambridge; Recollections and Appreciations of Lowell*, by F. H. Underwood; and *Letters*, edited by C. E. Norton, 2 vols. For criticism see Stedman's *Poets of America*; Haweis's *American Humorists*; Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*; Henry James's article on, in *Essays in London*; William Watson on "Lowell as a Critic," in *Excursions in Criticism*; Barrett Wendell on "Mr. Lowell as a Teacher," in *Stelligeri, and Other Essays Concerning America*; W. D. Howells in *Literary Friends and Acquaintances*; J. S. Clark's *Study of English and American Poets*; G. E. Woodberry's *Makers of Literature*; and W. C. Lawton's *New England Poets*.

Holmes.—1. *Poems*. "Old Ironsides"; "One-Hoss Shay"; "The Chambered Nautilus"; "Dorothy Q."; "Musa";

"Treadmill Song"; "The Last Leaf"; "The Music Grinder"; "La Grisette"; "The Oysterman"; (compare Thackeray's ballad-form).

(Much of Dr. Holmes' poetry is of the nature of *vers de société*, a form which has been well defined as "the expression of common sentiment and common feeling in graceful rhyme." Prior in the eighteenth century, Frederick Locker Lamson (died 1895), and Austin Dobson, have been among the most successful writers of this kind of verse. For an interesting article on this subject see "English Fugitive Poets," by G. B. Smith, in *Poets and Novelists*. (See also *American Familiar Verse*, by Brander Matthews.)

2. *The Breakfast Table Series*.—Of these *The Autocrat* is the best. As the book is of a fragmentary character, a fair idea may be formed from representative passages.

3. *Novels*.—If any of the novels are read, *Elsie Venner* will probably best repay perusal.

4. *Biography and Criticism*.—*Lives*, by W. S. Kennedy and E. E. Brown; *Life and Letters*, by J. T. Morse, Jr., 2 vols.; Curtis's *Literary and Social Essays*; Haweis's *American Humorists*; T. W. Higginson's *Old Cambridge*; W. D. Howells' *Literary Friends and Acquaintances*; S. M. Crothers' *O. W. Holmes*; J. S. Clark's *Study of English and American Poets*; and Stephen's *Studies of a Biographer*, vol. ii.

Whittier.—1. *Narrative and Legendary Poems*. "Cassandra Southwick," "Barclay of Ury," "Skipper Ireson's Ride," "Telling the Bees," "Maud Muller."

2. *Poems Subjective and Reminiscent*. "The Barefoot Boy," "Snow-Bound" (compare this poem with Burns's "The Cotter's Saturday Night"), "In School Days."

3. *Religious Poems*. "The Eternal Goodness," "In Quest," "Trust."

4. *War-time Poems*. "Barbara Frietchie," "Laus Deo," "Massachusetts to Virginia."

5. *Personal Poems*. "Ichabod," "Burns."

6. *Biography and Criticism*.—*Life and Letters*, by S. T. Pickard (2 vols.); *Life*, by G. R. Carpenter, in *American Men of Letters Series*; Bliss Perry, J. G. Whittier, and "Whittier for To-day," in *Park Street Papers*; T. W. Higginson in *Contemporaries*; G. E. Woodberry in *Makers of Literature*; Stoddard's *Haunts and Homes of Our Elder Poets*; Wendell's *Stelligeri*.

The Historians.—(It is impossible to enjoy or appreciate our great historians merely by reading selections from their works. As soon as possible the student should make himself acquainted with each of these writers by a careful reading of at least one of his works. The following suggestions are made for his future guidance, but the list might profitably be increased:)

1. BANCROFT. (a) *History of the United States*.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—*Life and Letters*, by M. A. D. Howe; T. W. Higginson in *Carlyle's Laugh*; article by W. M. Sloane in *Century Magazine*, vol. 2, p. 437; Griswold's *Prose Writers of American Literature*.

2. PRESCOTT. (a) *Conquest of Mexico*; *Ferdinand and Isabella*.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—*Life of*, by G. Ticknor; Edward Everett's *Oration on*, in *Everett's Orations*; *Essay on*, in *Essays and Reviews*, vol. ii., by Whipple.

3. MOTLEY. (a) *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

In addition to the works of Motley mentioned in the text, his unfinished *Life of John of Barneveld* is worthy of notice, both on account of Barneveld's connection with the period which Motley treats, and for the masterly way in which the character is presented.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—*Memoir of*, by O. W. Holmes; *The Correspondence of*, edited by George W. Curtis; *Article on*, in *Recollections of Eminent Men*, by E. P. Whipple.

4. PARKMAN. (a) *Conspiracy of Pontiac*.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—Life, by C. H. Farnham; Life, by H. D. Sedgwick, in *American Men of Letters Series*; Griswold's *Prose Writers of America*, p. 679; *Authors at Home*, edited by J. L. and J. B. Gilder.

5. WEBSTER. (a) *Webster's Great Speeches and Orations*, published in 1897; *Works of*, in 6 vols., with biographical sketch by Edward Everett; "Reply to Hayne," in *Orations and Arguments by English and American Statesmen*, edited by C. B. Bradley.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—Lives of, by G. T. Curtis; by Henry Cabot Lodge, in *American Statesmen Series*; by J. B. McMaster; and S. G. Fisher's *The True Daniel Webster*. For his style see Whipple's *American Literature*, and his *Essays and Reviews*, vol. i.

Whittier's poem "Ichabod" is of interest, as it represents the unfavorable view taken by the abolitionists of Webster's later political course.

6. LINCOLN. (a) *Gettysburg Address*, *Address at Cooper Institute*, and *Second Inaugural Address*, in *Riverside Literature Series*.

(b) *Biography and Criticism*.—Life, by Ida M. Tarbell, 2 vols.; Life, by J. T. Morse, in *American Statesmen Series*; W. E. Curtis, *The True Abraham Lincoln*; Norman Hapgood, *Abraham Lincoln*; Nicolay and Hay have written the standard *Life of Lincoln* (10 vols.), and have edited his complete works (2 vols.). The latter contains Bancroft's essay on "The Life and Character of Abraham Lincoln" and Gilder's essay on "Lincoln as a Writer." See also D. K. Dodge's *Abraham Lincoln, The Evolution of His Literary Style* (University of Ill. Press, 1900).

CHAPTER III

LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH

ON the whole the literature of England is that of a Northern people. The early Continental surroundings of the English people in a bleak, rain-drenched, storm-swept region were conducive to earnestness and melancholy rather than to that simple joy of life natural to those who dwell under a fairer and more southern sky. In spite of many modifying foreign influences, the early race-traits of the English have maintained their place with a dogged persistency, and we still find that a subdued or sombre coloring, a deep seriousness, a masculine vigor, rather than a lightness and grace, continue to characterize much of their best work. But when the English settled Virginia, when they established themselves in the Carolinas and in Georgia, this ancient Northern race found itself transported into the midst of Southern conditions. In place of the duller skies of England, clouded with a soft haze or obscured by a curtain of fog, they were set down in an atmosphere of transparent brilliancy, in a land where the mighty woods were bright with gaily-plumaged birds, where the heavens spread above them a luminous dome of blue in which at night the

stars glittered with wonderful radiance. In New England this same Anglo-Saxon race fought storm, privation, and peril after the manner of their fathers; they were still a people of the North. But another branch of this English stock came under a softer and less bracing atmosphere: they came into a mild and luxuriant region, a land of rich fields of rice and cotton, reaching down to semi-tropical Florida, with its winding bayous, its glowing wealth of flowers, and the Northern English literature came under the gentler influences of the warm and passionate South.

It is only within a very recent period, in such story-writers as Geo. W. Cable, Lafcadio Hearn, and Thos. Nelson Page, that the effect of these new conditions on literature has really become apparent, for until after the close of the Civil War the independent literary development of the Southern States was retarded by causes which have already been partially explained. The provision for general education in the South long continued painfully inadequate. Among the upper classes, the languorous climate, the possession of great estates crowded with slaves whose constant attendance relieved their masters from the necessity of making personal exertion—all these things, working in an aristocratic and conservative society, tended to foster among the more educated a life of splendid ease. Slave-labor, the richness of the soil, and the structure of Southern society, all tended to make the South largely dependent on agriculture; so while outside its limits new industries were springing up, the South, holding tenaciously to old ways, fell

farther and farther behind the other sections of the country in the rapid march of national prosperity. As manufacturing and commerce shot ahead in the Northern and Middle States, as the young West flung all its magnificent and impetuous energy into the utilization of its superb resources, the South, entrenched in its traditions and its chivalry, self-centered in its semi-feudal and Old-World picturesqueness, was left an anomaly in the midst of the eager life of an enterprising, money-making republic.

Such conditions told heavily in many ways against literary production. From the first, literature had suffered from the lack of town life. "Jamestown had perished, Williamsburg never grew, Richmond did not attain much size until long after Northern cities had become centers of books and intelligence."* During the present century, while Charleston, Richmond, and New Orleans were locally important and influential, the agricultural South had no such centers of literary activity as Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, successively the strongholds of literature and culture. Moreover, in a society where there was no adequate system of popular education, and where class feeling was strong, one who belonged to the masses had little chance to excel in literature, while one who belonged to the classes was unlikely seriously to devote himself to it, or, even should he do so, was unlikely to succeed.

There was indeed no lack of intellectual ability

* *Pioneers of Southern Literature*: "A Glance at the Field," by S. A. Link, p. 11.

inherent in the South, as her early records in law, statesmanship, and oratory abundantly prove; but the best powers of her leading minds were not put forth in a literary direction. A gentleman of the landed or aristocratic classes was apt to regard literature as a graceful accomplishment rather than as a serious and exacting profession. Thus one writer tells us that in Charleston literature was often thought of "as the choice recreation of gentlemen, as something fair and good, to be courted in a dainty, amateur fashion, and illustrated by *apropos* quotations from Lucretius, Virgil, or Horace."* Another Southern writer declares in a similar strain that "literature stood no chance because the ambition of young men of the South was universally turned in the direction of political distinction, and because the monopoly of advancement held by the profession of the law was too well established and too clearly recognized to admit of its claim being contested."†

Another potent cause was doubtless the dearth of influential publishing-houses. Poe, the greatest genius the South has given to literature, was driven to depend largely upon Northern publishers and Northern magazines for his support, and even the Southern writers who have risen into prominence during very recent years have almost invariably done so through the medium of the great publishing-houses and magazines of the North. The primary

* Paul Hamilton Hayne, quoted in W. P. Trent's *Life of Simms*.

† *The Old South*, by Thomas Nelson Page, p. 67.

causes of this unfortunate condition were probably the lack of general culture and literary appreciation in the South. Publishers, magazines, and authors are alike dependent for their support upon the readers and buyers of books, and when culture is the monopoly of the few, the conditions are all unfavorable to literary production.

If this absence of the diffusion of education lay at the root of the trouble, another radical drawback seems to have been the conservative spirit and behind-the-age tastes among the cultivated few. Many a Southern library contained but little later than the English classics of the earlier eighteenth century, and Pope in poetry and Addison in prose were accepted as the standards of correctness and elegance. We cannot but contrast this with the New England of Channing and Emerson, agitated by the latest wave of German thought, and quickly responsive to the fervor of Coleridge or Carlyle. So, comparatively cut off from the fresh current of ideas abroad, isolated by its peculiar social system and ideals from the rest of the country, yet prone to disregard or discourage an independent literary expression, the South, before the war, was heavily handicapped.

It is but just to the South to understand clearly the disadvantages under which it labored, for when the facts are understood, instead of asking why its contribution to literature was not more important, we are surprised at the amount it accomplished. Our tendency is to slight the work of this great section, and give to that of the Northern writers a somewhat undue

prominence. A more impartial survey shows us that the warm, imaginative Southern nature, sympathetic, beauty-loving, romantic, has made notable additions to our literature in the past, and that it is likely to prove a yet more important element in our national literature in the future.

Two characteristics of the Southern literature of this century are precisely what the social conditions just described would lead us to expect. In the first place, a large proportion of the ^{The} ~~best~~ ^{Writers.} writing, especially during the earlier part of the period, is produced by men who are not professional men of letters, but whose chief energies are spent in other fields. Thus JOHN MARSHALL, whose *Life of Washington* (1804-1807) has been called "the first great contribution to American historical literature,"* was one of our greatest jurists and the Chief Justice of the United States. WILLIAM WIRT, favorably known by his *Life of Patrick Henry* and *Letters of a British Spy*, was long a lawyer in active practice, and Attorney-General under Monroe and Adams. EDWARD COATE PINKNEY (1802-1828), some of whose slight and sentimental songs echo the lyrics of the English cavalier poets of the seventeenth century, was also a lawyer, and this list of those whose powers were thus diverted from literature might be greatly enlarged.

In the second place we are impressed with the fact that there are no groups or schools of writers such as

* Cooke's *History of Virginia*, American Commonwealths Series, p. 490.

we find gathered about a common center in Boston or New York. Men of talent and of literary tastes and ambition appear in South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, and Louisiana, too often to fight almost single-handed the unequal battle against poverty, indifference, or neglect. It is consequently difficult to gain any comprehensive idea of Southern literature, as its history is so largely a record of comparatively isolated careers.

Prominent among the early Southern writers of the century is JOHN PENDLETON KENNEDY (1795-1870), a native of Baltimore. His three novels, *Swallow Barn, a Story of Rural Life in Virginia* (1832); *Horse Shoe Robinson, a Tale of the Tory Ascendency* (1835); and *Rob of the Bowl* (1838), present to us a vivid and pleasing picture of some characteristic aspects of Southern life. Kennedy is another example of the prevailing tendency to subordinate literature to other interests, for, like so many of his literary contemporaries, he led the active life of a lawyer and statesman.

Another novelist, WILLIAM GILMORE SIMMS (1806-1870), stands apart from the men to whom the writing of books was but a side issue, as the first Southern writer of distinction to follow literature as a profession. This circumstance, involving as it did a long and gallant struggle with adverse conditions, gives him an important place, aside from the intrinsic value of his writings, as the pioneer among the Southern men of letters. Simms was a man of fine physique and vigorous personality, his character was noble and impetu-

ous; he had an instinctive delight in the active and adventurous side of life, and described it in many a stirring romance with a true sympathetic power. He was born in Charleston, and became in after years an important influence in its intellectual and literary life. Simms's life began in struggle and uncertainty, for his father had become financially involved, and moved from place to place in the effort to repair his broken fortunes. The boy's early opportunities for education were scanty. He never went to college, but from the first he was an ardent reader. At eight years of age his lifelong passion for writing had already declared itself. As a youth, he was a druggist's apprentice; then he studied law, and was admitted to the bar in 1827. But before this he had published two volumes of youthful verse, and an irresistible inclination urged him towards literature. After several other ventures in verse Simms published *Martin Faber*, 1833, the first of that long succession of romances of adventure on which his chief claim to be remembered rests. The best of these stories deal with the Colonial life of the South, or with that life during the succeeding period of the Revolution. While far from being a finished writer, Simms had great qualifications for such a task, an enthusiastic love for his State and a close acquaintance with its scenery, a pride in the history of his section, and an intimate knowledge of its past. Behind all this lay the genuine narrative power and vigorous spirit of the man.

Simms is distinctly inferior to Cooper, with whom he inevitably suggests comparison; yet his best stories

form a kind of companion study to Cooper's work, depicting as they do the same period of our national growth under Southern instead of under Northern or Western conditions. In his portrayal of the Indian character Simms is probably more truthful than Cooper, whose Indian heroes, if more romantic, are, it is to be feared, more ideal. Among Simms's many books, *The Yemassee* (1835), which deals with an Indian outbreak in Colonial South Carolina, and *The Partisan* (1835), a story of the Revolution and the exploits of Marion and his band, may be mentioned as good examples of his powers. Charleston may be thought of as the nearest approach the South had to a literary center in Simms's time, yet Charleston was slow to recognize him, and he was often forced to look to the North for help and encouragement. Many of his works were published in New York, and once on returning from a trip to that city he declared bitterly that he was surprised to find the North so warm and the South so cold. But Simms was a man of generous, helpful temper, and, although nearly ruined by the Civil War, he did all in his power for the younger literary men who were trying to force their way to the front.

Among them were the poets PAUL HAMILTON HAYNE (1830-1886) and HENRY TIMROD (1829-1867), both of whom were natives of Charleston and members of this Charleston group. Unlike Simms, Hayne was a college graduate, the heir to a moderate fortune, and the inheritor of an ancient name. He became a contributor to several

Hayne and
Timrod.

Southern magazines, but like so many of his contemporaries, he entrusted his first volume to a Northern publishing-house (Poems: Ticknor & Fields; Boston, 1855). He had studied law in his youth, but he gave a lifetime of single-minded effort to his art. His poetry is melodious, graceful, and carefully wrought, but while not precisely imitative, it is often close in form and manner to certain English models. Like Keats and William Morris, he is touched by the beauty of the classic and romantic ideals, and his narrative poems have an undeniable smoothness and charm. He also excelled as a sonneteer.

The memory of his lifelong friend Henry Timrod is closely associated with Hayne. The two poets were schoolfellows in Charleston, and in their early youth they frequently attended the literary reunions at the hospitable home of Simms. Timrod died at thirty-eight, and left but a slender volume of verse behind him. Hayne far surpassed him in range as well as in the amount of his poetic production. Nevertheless there is in Timrod a more distinctly Southern atmosphere and a stronger note of personality. We are inclined to associate Hayne with that amiable English poet Leigh Hunt; but Timrod has an originality which makes him the precursor of the Southern genius, Sidney Lanier. Thus *The Cotton Boll*, with its vista of the wide expanse of snowy cotton-fields bathed in the dazzling sunlight, and its defiant note of challenge to the North, is both suggestive of Lanier and distinctly the product of the South. In many of Timrod's poems we are delighted with descriptions of

nature that betray a close observation and genuine sympathy; indeed all of Timrod's work has this genuine quality. There is nothing bookish or second-hand about it; it speaks rather of a fresh and independent grasp of life.

In reviewing the work of this little group of Charleston writers we must remember that, in common with other Southern writers, their prospects were blighted and their free development checked by the desperate struggle of the Civil War. At the outbreak of this desolating contest Charleston was just beginning to be, in a lesser degree, the Boston of the South. The number of ambitious periodicals started within its borders between 1828 (*The Southern Review*) and 1842 (*Southern Quarterly*) bears witness to the literary aspirations of at least some of its leaders, even if the short life of most of these enterprises points with equal certainty to the lack of a reading public. But when Simms had led the way and by his gallant fight made literature more possible as a profession for those who came after, the very life of the South was absorbed in the four tragic years of war. While the war furnished a theme to many a Southern poet; while Hayne, Timrod, and many others sang their songs of battle with an intense conviction of the righteousness of their cause, rivalling that of Whittier or Lowell in the North,—the Civil War was, on the whole, a heavy blow to the rising Southern literature. In the midst of that life-and-death struggle, with the Northern arms on their soil, men had neither time nor money for the patronage of literature, nor the desire to turn aside from the one issue which claimed them. And

to many a promising Southern writer the war brought little short of financial ruin. It reduced Simms, who was living in affluence, to the bitter necessity of toiling at hack-work for a bare living; it swept away Hayne's fortune and forced him to depend upon his own exertions; it brought Timrod to the verge of actual starvation, involving him in difficulties from which he was released only by death. When we think of the odds against which these Southern writers contended, and then recall all those favoring circumstances in which the genius of Longfellow and many another member of the New England group was enabled to reach its full development, we cannot but wonder what the South might have accomplished for our literature under equally advantageous conditions.

Apart from this little coterie of Charleston writers were the Virginia novelists JOHN ESTEN COOKE (1830-1886) and MARY VIRGINIA TERHUNE Virginia. (1837-), better known under her pseudonym of Marion Harland. Cooke portrayed the stately and aristocratic life in old Virginia, essaying to do for his native State what Simms had accomplished for South Carolina, Hawthorne for Colonial New England, or Irving for Knickerbocker New York. Some of his later romances, such as *The Wearing of the Gray*, deal with the Civil War, in which Cooke himself took part. He also wrote some biographies and an excellent history of Virginia. *The Virginia Comedians* (1854), which has been pronounced "the best novel produced in the South before the war,"* gives

* This is the verdict of both Prof. Richardson and Prof.

an interesting picture of the courtly society at Williamsburg, the old capital, under the ancient régime. The book, however, belongs to an era in novel-writing that has passed away, and to the modern taste the style is high-flown and extravagant, while the humor often seems to come dangerously near to the absurd. Marion Harland, who, though born in Virginia, has spent a great part of her life in the North, has also depicted Southern life. Her books, which are quieter and more finished in tone than those of Cooke, gained a well-deserved popularity.

Besides the writers which Virginia has given to literature, she has the distinction of having produced and sustained the *Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond, 1835-1864), the best-known literary magazine of the South. Compared with our leading periodicals of to-day it impresses us as amateurish and provincial, yet it was of inestimable advantage to many a rising Southern writer, and an important factor in literary development. As Thomas Nelson Page, one of the best of the recent writers of Virginia, remarks, "It had much to do with sustaining the unstable Poe, and with developing nearly all those writers of the South whose names have survived." *

Georgia, although deficient in large towns, and without a literary center, has made most important additions to the literature of the South. It has

Beers. Thomas Nelson Page, on the other hand, expresses a preference for the later novels.

* "Authorship in the South Before the War," in *The Old South*.

enriched our literature of humor with the graphic *Georgia Scenes* of A. B. LONGSTREET, and with the restful fun and shrewd wisdom of JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS. To Georgia we owe another writer, RICHARD MALCOLM JOHNSTON, whose short stories were widely and favorably known. In poetry it has given us Dr. FRANK O. TICKNOR (1822-1874) and SIDNEY LANIER (1842-1881), the latter, in the opinion of many, the greatest literary genius the South has yet produced. Dr. Ticknor lived the self-sacrificing life of a kindly, hard-worked physician, but in the scant leisure which the duties of his profession allowed him he wrote some poems—less known than they should be—which deserve to live. One of these, *Little Giffen*, which commemorates one of the otherwise unknown heroes of the war, has a concentrated force and directness which make it not unworthy of comparison with some of Browning's shorter narrative poems. Lanier's work is of so great importance as to demand a separate mention.

In Louisiana, literature has been notably influenced by the large French element in the population, and so pronounced is this influence that some of its most important contributions to literature have been written in French. But in more recent years, Louisiana, with Indiana and Kentucky, has helped onward the rising literature of the far South.

From this general survey of the place of the Southern States in the making of our national literature we must pass to a fuller consideration of two leading writers, Edgar Allan Poe and Sidney Lanier.

STUDY LIST

SOUTHERN LITERATURE

1. **Songs of the South**, edited by J. T. Clarke, with an introduction by Joel Chandler Harris (Lippincott, 1895), contains a selection from Southern poets from Colonial times to the present day. *War Poetry of the South*, edited by Wm. Gilmore Simms (New York, 1867).

2. **Southern Literature.**—*A History of Southern Literature*, by Carl Holliday, Neale Publishing Co., 1906; M. J. Moses, *The Literature of the South*; W. P. Trent, *Southern Writers*, selections in prose and verse; C. W. Hubner, *Representative Southern Poets*; Louise Manly, *Southern Literature*; F. V. N. Painter, *Poets of the South*. *The Old South*, by Thomas Nelson Page, contains an article on Authorship in the South before the war, and is valuable in general for a study of Southern conditions from a Southern point of view.

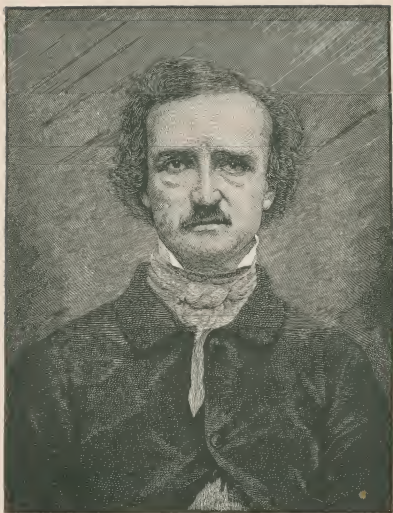
Dr. Frank O. Tieknor, Henry Timrod, and Paul Hamilton Hayne, by Samuel A. Link, in the little series of studies entitled *Pioneers of Southern Literature*.

There is also another series by Wm. Malone Baskervill, entitled *Southern Writers*.

For reference to Virginia in particular, consult Cooke's *Virginia* in the American Commonwealths Series. See also "English Culture in Virginia," by W. P. Trent (Johns Hopkins University Studies, vol. vii., p. 198).

EDGAR ALLAN POE (1809-1849)

Probably no writer in the history of our literature has been the subject of such active controversy as Edgar Allan Poe. As a man he has had bitter assailants and indignant defenders; he has alternately been loaded by his defamers with unmeasured abuse, and presented to us by his generous advocates as one driven to his ruin by "unmerciful disaster"; an



EDGAR ALLAN POE

For and from them.

It is impossible not to find
the cold, bare, hard, bold hand
and note at the same great
formation, first a General illustration
with such singular and almost
unlike forms, and of their peculiar
forms from such similar
forms as in nature were
likely to be and regular - But
the delicate at least was some
times, but the paper is choice
than the other kinds are more
general and constant, but
more extensive and artificial.
The more regular and
and the more in the way of
the more general and the
on the more general and the
for the more general, and the
more - a scientific design.
The more general and the
more, but in the more of
solutions of spiritual principles,
or of the more of the more
the more of the more of the more
more, and the more of the more
more the more -
The more of the more of the more
more, and the more of the more
the more of the more of the more
as the more of the more of the more
the more of the more of the more
more of the more of the more

unhappy genius, worthy of our pity and our tears. As a poet his place has been almost equally a matter of dispute. Some critics of eminence have placed him in the first rank among the poets of America, while others, impressed by the narrowness of his range and his lack of a broad basis of thought and emotion, have considered him as a clever craftsman, chiefly remarkable for his skill in the employment of certain metrical and melodic effects. Other writers, again, contend that the true view is to be found in some middle region between these extremes. In all this confusion one thing at least is certain—Poe is one of the few American writers who somehow have succeeded in arresting and holding the attention of the world of letters. At least one of his productions, *The Raven*, is among the most widely known short poems in the language; his short stories have been enthusiastically received, especially in France; and whatever we may think of his character, his aims, or his work, Poe is one of the men about whom the student of literature is bound to have an opinion.

Only the main facts in the story of Poe's unregulated and unhappy life need be given here. We have said that the poets of the New England group were remarkable for the nobility and purity of their lives. From first to last they impress us with a steadfastness and strength of purpose which springs from a solid basis of manhood; when sorrow overtakes them they meet it with fortitude, and they are secure in the power of self-control. From whatever cause, Poe's life and character, when placed beside that of

Longfellow or of Lowell, stand out in sharp and tragic contrast. Among our American men of letters Poe is peculiarly representative of that unfortunate class of men of genius which in England includes Marlowe, Burns, and Byron; men whose just balance was destroyed, and whose lives were wrecked at last by the association, with their great gifts, of ungoverned emotions, weakness of will, and a morbid outlook on the world. We need not take it upon ourselves either to blame or to excuse; we are simply called upon to realize the facts of Poe's life so far as they help us to appreciate the tone and spirit of his work.

Poe's place in our literature is one of peculiar isolation. Of Northern birth but of Southern ancestry, he belongs by common consent among the writers of the South; yet his writings, unlike those of Simms, Timrod, and their associates, have no distinctively Southern background. He is not bound to any one section, but wanders in his unsettled and struggling career from city to city, trying his fortune with equal ill success in Boston, Richmond, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. Unlike Irving, Emerson, or Longfellow, he belongs to no literary movement or coterie: distantly resembling Hawthorne in his prose tales, his deepest ties are with trans-Atlantic writers; in his own country he stands essentially alone.

Poe came of an old and honorable Maryland family. His father, David Poe, married an actress, and himself went on the stage. Their profession took them to Boston, and there Edgar Allan Poe, the second of

Poe's
life.

with something of Hawthorne's genius
it arises on the one hand, and
Poe's supernaturalism and for those
on the other

three children, was born on the 19th of January, 1809. Two years later the death of both parents within a year left the children, the eldest only five years old, wholly unprovided for. Poe's mother had died in Richmond, and the child was charitably received into the family of his godfather, Mr. John Allan, a wealthy merchant of that city, who treated him with kindness, and, as he grew up, made liberal provision for his education.

The Allans spent some time in England, placing Poe in a school near London, and on their return to Richmond he entered the University of Virginia (1826). So far, it must be admitted, Poe's opportunities had been far greater than his early misfortunes would have led us to expect; but at college, while he distinguished himself as a scholar, he developed an unfortunate propensity for gambling, involving himself in debts which Mr. Allan finally refused to pay. His benefactor accordingly took him from college and put him into business in Richmond. But the drudgery of the counting-house was repugnant to Poe's tastes; he was doubtless impatient of control, and he forfeited his opportunity a second time by running away to Boston and enlisting in the regular army, where he served with some credit for two years.

Soon after his arrival in Boston he had taken the first step in his literary career by the publication of a small book of verse, *Tamerlane and Other Poems* (1827). This was followed two years later by a second venture, *Al Araaf, Tamerlaine, and Minor Poems* (1829). At this time English poetry had just

passed through a fervid period of romance and sentiment, and these early poems of Poe's show that he was affected by the prevailing spell of Byron and Moore. As Mr. Stedman says: "Poe, growing up under the full romantic stress at the end of the Georgian period, . . . inevitably copied the manner and structure of poems he must have known by heart."* Moreover, one of Poe's morbid temperament, with an unwholesome fondness for melancholy, must have found something peculiarly attractive in Byron's congenial gloom.

In 1829 Poe effected a partial reconciliation with Mr. Allan, who again gave his aid by securing his admission to West Point. This third opportunity was also wilfully thrown away. Poe neglected, and finally utterly disregarded, his military duties, and as a result was court-martialled and dismissed in 1831. Thus again thrown on his own resources, for he could expect no further aid from Mr. Allan, Poe settled in Baltimore, and, after one or two years of struggle, entered upon the hard task of supporting himself by his pen. His first literary success was his story of the *MS. found in a Bottle*, which won him a prize of one hundred dollars (1833). In the year following Mr. Allan died, without making provision for his former ward, so that Poe was left, as he said, "penniless, without a profession, and with very few friends." Nevertheless in 1835 he married his cousin, Virginia Clemm, a girl of thirteen. It is but just to say that

* Stedman and Woodberry's ed. of Poe, vol. x.; Introd., p. xx.

Poe was devotedly attached to his wife from first to last, and that she and her mother faithfully shared his poverty and disappointments, and were patient with his faults. Even at this time he yielded habitually to that passion for drink which was at last his ruin. He was in great destitution when through the influence of J. P. Kennedy he obtained employment on the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which had just been started. From this time he led an unsettled, hand-to-mouth existence. He was connected from time to time with various magazines, and he became widely known as poet, story-writer, critic, and editor. The illness of his wife, who died in 1847, drove Poe, if we accept his own account, to greater excesses. At all events his habits grew worse, and in addition to excessive drinking he became addicted to the use of opium. From these causes, and probably because his peculiarities of temperament made him difficult to get along with, Poe's engagements with the various magazines and periodicals with which he was successively connected were usually of short duration. With numerous opportunities, with friends disposed to advance his interests, with undoubted ability, and with great readiness as a writer, his poverty somehow kept pace with his growing reputation. Almost to the last he cherished great plans; if he worked irregularly, he yet worked hard and rapidly, and he has left his impress upon our poetry and our prose; yet his life, extenuate it as we may, is a melancholy record of weakness and error, from the dissipations of his college days to its awful close. In

1849, having become engaged to be married to a Mrs. Shelton, he came to Baltimore to bring Mrs. Clemm to the wedding. While there he was found overcome by drink or opium, and dangerously ill. He was taken to a hospital, and there a few days later he died.

Poe claims our attention as a critic, a poet, and a story-writer. His critical work, while sometimes acute and discriminating, especially when he deals with the technicalities of composition, is, on the whole, of passing rather than of lasting importance, and adds but little to his permanent reputation. He had not, as Lowell had, the breadth of view and the solid basis of scholarship which are such important elements in any enduring work of criticism. Lacking these great essentials, Poe was not free from a taint of petty jealousy, and at times he suffered his personal likes or dislikes to influence his critical judgments. A conspicuous example of this is found in his series of papers on *The Literati of New York*. On the other hand, he did good service, as in his recognition of the genius of Hawthorne, and if his work in this direction is not of the highest quality, he must be recognized as among the influential critics of his time.

Poe's critical writings have already fallen into a comparatively subordinate place, and it is on his work as poet and romance-writer that our estimate of his genius must really rest. Judged by this, the best that he has given us, we cannot but acknowledge his very positive limitations. He is neither profound nor

Poe as a
writer.

As poet and
romance-
writer.

varied; he is powerless to uplift, to inspire, or to console. His fame rests, not on his ability to do many things, but on his power to do a few things almost incomparably well. The reasons for his success within certain positive limits are singularly definite and comprehensible, and we can enumerate the magic gifts which the fairy godmother of genius bestowed on him in his cradle.

He was endowed with that power of close analysis, of logical and consecutive thought, which we associate with a mathematical and keenly intellectual mind. While this is by no means his greatest gift, it shows itself unmistakably in one side of his life and work. It is seen in his power of deciphering cryptograms, and in the cleverness with which, as in *The Gold Bug*, he involves his readers in a tangle in order to delight them with his skill in unravelling it. The clearness of his reasoning powers is shown in his detective story, *The Mystery of Marie Roget*. He was able to foretell correctly the plot of Dickens's *Barnaby Rudge* after reading the first few chapters, and nearly half a century ago he could predict the present era of tall buildings in New York city. The same hard intellectual temper is shown in his interest in science, of which he made use in fiction somewhat as Jules Verne did in later years.

Poe was further endowed with great narrative power of a certain kind. He could tell a story rapidly and vividly, filling it with a marvellous reality and thrilling interest. One of the best examples of this side of Poe's genius is the minute and horrible story

of adventure, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. In such stories Poe is the follower of that great master of realistic story-telling, Daniel Defoe.* But while possessing this kind of narrative power in a high degree, Poe used it sparingly, for in many of his best stories his primary object is not the unfolding of a plot, but the revelation of a mood or the production of a single effect. This ability to combine the incidents and accessories of a story so that they all work together to deepen a single impression upon the reader's mind and imagination was one of the greatest with which Poe was endowed. From this aspect the nature of his art may well be styled "pictorial," for in many of his best studies, both in poetry and in prose, he resembles a painter who subordinates everything to the production of one harmonious color tone.

With Poe, this tone or total effect is gradually produced by the introduction of a number of minute and highly suggestive descriptive details, each touch, directed to the same end, intensifying the effect of what has gone before, until the whole work is filled with the spirit or atmosphere which takes hold of us with an extraordinary and ever-increasing power. *The Fall of the House of Usher* is a good instance of Poe's success in this particular method of composition. The mood of passive grief which the story embodies is associated with and interpreted by melancholy images of neglect, decay, and death. Our appreciation of the mental condition of the unhappy master of the House is intensified by the sombre and mournful

* See Stoddard's ed. of Poe's Works ; Introd., vol. i. p. 11.

background to the story, ineffaceably imprinted on our imagination,—a doomed house, crumbling into ruin, with its vacant, staring windows; the whole structure an image of desolation set in the midst of a deserted and indescribably dreary landscape. The spectral trees about it, with their stark, white branches, the gray sedge, the black tarn,—all these insensibly combine to create that unity of effect which makes a landscape of Poe's as individual, after its own fashion, as a picture of Corot's. And as the command of neutral tints is shown in the subdued tone of this picture, so the command of color-effects is conspicuous in *The Masque of the Red Death*. There, each room in the prince's suite is ablaze with a color of its own: blue or purple, green or orange, white or blood-red, the light streams through the stained glass of the Gothic windows. This same pictorial quality reappears in certain of Poe's poems. We recognize it in *Ulalume*, with its autumnal fall of decay and death, "with its dank tarn of Auber," its mists, and its withered leaves; we recognize it in *The City in the Sea*, that disordered vision of a citadel of Death, whose "Babylon-like walls" are lit by no rays from heaven, but by a strange light from the "lurid sea."

Fine as such conceptions are, they are remotely suggestive of a theatrical striving after scenic effects; they seem to rise from an unwholesome imagination. Shadowy, fantastic, distorted, they make us feel that (to borrow Poe's own phrase) in the spell he casts over us there is—

“Much of madness and more of sin,
And horror the soul of the plot.” *

Yet, within the confines of the grotesque and terrible, Poe has few superiors. He rules over this sombre, miasmatic, melancholy region, full of waste places, of ruins, and of stagnant waters, haunted by broken hopes and “leaden-eyed despairs.”

In addition to Poe's pictorial power and closely associated with it is his mastery of one especial mood—the mood of a passionate and hopeless grief. Much of his best prose and poetry consists of studied and highly artistic variations on a single theme—sorrow for the death of a young and beautiful woman. *The Raven*, *Annabel Lee*, *Ulalume*, and *For Annie* are familiar examples of this in his poetry; *Ligeia*, *Berenice*, and *The Fall of the House of Usher* in his prose. The underlying theme is variously treated: it may take form as a simple lyrical expression of grief, as in *Annabel Lee*, or all the wonderful resources of Poe's pictorial art may be employed to enhance it, as in *The Fall of the House of Usher*; but in either case we can detect the fundamental similarity.

Finally, Poe was endowed with still another gift,—a gift of musical utterance, which gives to his verse a charm and melody of its own. Shallow in its thought, narrow in its range, almost devoid of true human sympathy, Poe's poetry has made a secure place for itself largely by an undefinable fascination that he somehow found in the lingering beauty of his

* Verses in *Ligeia*.

musical utterance. Critics have pointed out that this especial haunting quality of Poe's verse is mainly due to his use of what are technically known as the refrain and the repetend, the first a familiar poetic device, the second not wholly unknown before Poe's time. The refrain is the recurrence at stated intervals of a particular word or phrase; the repetend, as employed by Poe, is the immediate repetition of a line in a slightly modified form. Stedman, who has given much attention to the subject, thinks that Poe was aided in his characteristic employment of these two metrical effects by certain passages in Mrs. Browning and in Coleridge. At all events there is an originality as well as beauty in Poe's use of these effects, and we feel that by his use of what had been done before he virtually created a new thing. Whatever the source of his music, Poe's verse has that unmistakable note of personality which is one of the marks of a true poet. It is no small matter to have added anything to the technique of English verse, and when we reflect upon the wild power of Poe's imagination, upon his lyrical and descriptive gifts and marked individuality of tone, we must assign him, in spite of all that we miss in him, a place among our poets which is both distinctive and secure.

Our final estimate of Poe's work as a whole will depend upon our view of the true function of the artist. He believed that the artist's highest work and mission was to give pleasure; he defined poetry as "the rhythmical creation of beauty," and declared that "unless incidentally" it had "no concern what-

*as does a flower in a field
nor a bird in a cage
nor a man in Emerson's poetry*

never

ever with duty or with truth." He put forth all the resources of his genius: his intellectual subtility, his feeling for the weird, the sublime, and the grotesque, his sense of color, his sense of sound,—he manipulated all these as a skillful craftsman for the building of works of wonder and beauty. He probably did all that it was in him to do. If we are satisfied that he was right in his aims and in his theory of art, we can ask nothing more. But if we believe that the spiritual and moral are vital elements in the greatest art, if we think that conscience and truth and duty have their place in its temple, we are forced to conclude that the limitations of Poe's own nature, the painful inadequacy of the man himself, have left ineffaceable marks upon the quality and character of his work, and prevented it from reaching an excellence to which it might otherwise have attained. *To be in Paradise*

STUDY LIST

POE

1. Poems.—"The Raven," "The Bells," "The City in the Sea," "Ulalume," "Annabel Lee," "The Haunted Palace," "Eulalie." *Ligeia, Man, "Tamerlane"*
2. Tales.—"The Black Cat," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "The Gold Bug," "William Wilson," "Ligeia," "The Masque of the Red Death." *St. George, "The Masque of the Red Death"*
3. Biography and Criticism.—Woodberry, *Life, in American Men of Letters Series*, and *Life, with correspondence, etc.*, 2 vols.; J. A. Harrison, *Life and Letters of Poe*, 2 vols.; J. H. Whitty, "Memoir," in his edition of Poe's *Complete Poems*; R. H. Stoddard, "Memoir," in his edition of Poe's works. A standard edition of the works is that of Woodberry and Stedman, containing a life and a critical esti-

St. George, "The Masque of the Red Death"
Annabel Lee, "Ulalume," "The Haunted Palace"
St. George, "The Masque of the Red Death"

mate. For criticism, see also C. W. Hubner, "Poe and Some of His Critics," in *Representative Southern Poets*; Arthur Ransome, *E. A. Poe, a Critical Study*; W. P. Trent, "Centenary of Poe," in *Longfellow and Other Essays*; Stedman's *Poets of America*; Andrew Lang's *Letters to Dead Authors*; and Edmund Gosse's "Has America Produced a Poet?" in *Questions at Issue*.

SIDNEY LANIER

Without question, Poe's greatest successor in poetry among the writers of the South is Sidney Lanier. In surveying the scattered and difficult beginnings of Southern literature before the war, Poe's melancholy figure stands as on a solitary eminence; in any general view of that literature during the years of civil contest and the period immediately succeeding, Lanier holds, at least in poetry, a correspondingly important place.

In passing from the earlier to the later writer we cannot but be impressed by the sharp contrast between them in character, in life, in work, and in ideals of art. It is true that Lanier's life, like Poe's, was one of struggle and hardship; but the obstacles which confronted Lanier were not of his own making, and his whole career is a manly warfare with adverse conditions, fought out with unfaltering will and unswerving purpose, until the very end. Beset by difficulties, he makes us feel that for a man of his strong and courageous spirit the weakness of failure is impossible.

Sidney Lanier was born at Macon in 1842, in that middle region of Georgia which has already given so

much to literature. His father, Robert S. Lanier, was a lawyer; his mother's ancestors were honorably associated with the history of Virginia, and by her thrift the family lived plainly but comfortably. The boy's two ruling passions, music and literature, showed themselves in his earliest years; he found his way to books with the instinct of the born reader, but, as he himself tells us, even before he could write legibly he could "play passably well on several instruments." At fourteen he entered Oglethorpe College, a neighboring institution, then of no great importance. A few weeks after his graduation, after he had passed four years in what he calls "the uncongenial atmosphere of a farcical college," the country was on the edge of the Civil War. Already the "two figures of music and of poetry" had taken their place in his heart, but in 1861, then a boy of nineteen, he enlisted as private in the Macon Volunteers. Throughout the entire struggle he served bravely and faithfully; he bore his part in the battles of Seven Pines, Drewry's Bluffs in the seven days' conflict about Richmond, and in the bloody battle of Malvern Hill; he was also on the signal service, and detailed for duty as a mounted scout. Captured and imprisoned for five months, he found himself at the close of the war without a profession, almost without money, and with his health seriously impaired. Yet through all and under all he had kept unchanged his boyish devotion to the two arts of poetry and music. Years of struggle lay before him. At one time he tried to support himself

Lanier's
life.

by teaching; at another he was clerk in a hotel; for a time, at his father's wish, he studied law. In 1867 he published his first book, *Tiger Lilies*, in which he records many of his experiences in the war and many of his youthful hopes and aspirations. In the same year he married Miss Mary Day, entering upon a life of happiness and sympathy the high influence of which is hinted at in some of his most beautiful poems. But, content at home, at the very outset of his literary career he had to begin that long and depressing struggle with disease which ended only with his death. In 1868 he had a hemorrhage from the lungs, and his work henceforth was done, with many intervals of critical illness, with the fatal shadow hanging over him. Putting aside his father's offer to join him in practicing law at Macon, he determined to devote whatever time and health were left him to carrying out the great purpose of his life. Accordingly, in 1873, he settled in Baltimore, having obtained the position of first flute in the Peabody Symphony Orchestra. From this time he remained "engaged always in a threefold struggle—for health, for bread, and for a literary career." The odds against him were heavy; he was comparatively unknown, but, faithful to his ideals, he persisted in writing poetry as he thought it should be, without regard to what the public might like or demand. After some disappointments, *Corn*, his first important poem, found a place in *Lippincott's Magazine*, through the discrimination of Mr. John Foster Kirk, at that time its editor. The connection proved a fortunate one. *The Sym-*

phony, *The Psalm of the West*, and other poems appeared in the same magazine, and in 1877 a collection of his verse was published by the Lippincotts.

Lanier had a deep conviction of the worth and high seriousness of the poet's art. He asserted that Poe "did not know enough," and felt that the fullest and most perfect art must rest on a solid basis of thought and knowledge. From the time of his settlement in Baltimore he had therefore set himself to a careful and extensive study of English literature, and the outcome of this study was first a number of lecture courses on literature at private schools and elsewhere, and finally an appointment as lecturer at Johns Hopkins University. Two books, *The Science of English Verse*, an exposition of his theory of the principles of versification, and *The English Novel*, are made up of lectures originally given in the course of his duties at the University. Besides his teaching and his music he had to rely upon a considerable amount of miscellaneous literary work in the hard "struggle for bread." He wrote a descriptive handbook of Florida in the interests of a railroad company, and towards the close of his life edited, for young readers, *Froissart* and several other noble old classics. Always his high ideals were before him, but, as he says in one of his earlier letters, his head and his heart were often full of poems which the "dreadful struggle for bread" would not give him time to put on paper. In 1881, when the hard task of getting a living was growing easier, and when he could at length count on some long-looked-for leisure, to give his genius yet

fuller utterance, the disease with which he had contended so long finally struck him down. Brave to the last, he wrote *Sunrise*, one of the most beautiful of his poems, when consumed with fever and under the immediate expectation of the end. He died a few months later, September 7, 1881, and, in his wife's words, "that unfaltering will rendered its supreme submission" to the Will of the Highest.

Before attempting to judge of Lanier's work as a poet, it is well to remember the disadvantages under which he labored and the difficulty of the task he set himself. We must think of Lanier's
work. him passing from a small country college to the battle-field; of his long fight with sickness and poverty; of his burden of uncongenial work, his struggle for recognition, his intense longing in the midst of restricted surroundings for a fuller life in the quickening atmosphere of art and culture. We must remember how he wrote to Bayard Taylor in 1875 that his life had been "a mere drought and famine" for the want of such an atmosphere. We must remember, further, how beyond all the hindrances from without lay the inner difficulty of perfecting new theories of the poetic form, and of expressing those noble ideals of art which he strove to realize.

The higher the view a poet takes of his vocation, the greater the demand upon his powers; the loftier the purpose, the greater the strength required for its accomplishment. To Lanier, with his single-minded consecration of his efforts to a great ideal, Browning's words are strikingly applicable:

"That low man seeks a little thing to do,
 Sees it, and does it;
 This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
 Dies e'er he knows it."

So far as his poetic form is concerned, Lanier came as an innovator, and was brought face to face with those difficulties which confront all who seek to discover and apply new principles of composition. He believed that there was an underlying analogy between the musical and the poetic form, the full possibilities of which poets had as yet failed to appreciate, and he sought to carry more fully into poetry certain principles of musical composition. He had not time to fully work out his ideas; much of his work was doubtless experimental; and it is probably for this reason that we find in it an eccentricity of expression apparently due to his imperfect mastery of his methods. In itself it was no light task to perfect a new method of poetic expression; but Lanier's was not the nature to rest content with the mastery of any novelty of form. To him the poet was one of the world's spiritual helpers and guides, and art the revelation through a beautiful body of a beautiful soul in the work. In this, as in all other respects, Poe and Lanier are fundamentally opposed. To the one, as has been said, truth and goodness were incidental and unimportant elements in art; to the other they were the very breath of its life. True art, in Lanier's eyes, is "inexorably moral." "Unless you are suffused with truth, wisdom, goodness, and love," he writes, "abandon the hope that the ages will accept you as

an artist." The ideal of Milton or of Browning is not more noble than Lanier's; their aims are no higher, their solemn consecration of themselves to serve in art's high temple is not more complete.

When we thus take into account his limitations and the largeness of his aims, it does not surprise us that Lanier's poetry impresses us as frequently involved and incomplete. It lacks simplicity; there is often a sense of strain and effort, a painful absence of that ease which comes with the highest powers. Yet with all difficulties of utterance there is in it an inspiring loftiness of thought, a deep sympathy with the life of nature, and at times a wonderful lyrical and poetic beauty. It has, moreover, that accent of originality which among our American poets is rare indeed. In his close fellowship with nature, as in the *Hymns of the Marshes*, he seems to merge himself in the great sum of her life. He has given us the glow and quiet of the Southern landscape, as in the *Tampa Robins*, or *A Florida Sunday*. A true patriotic feeling for the greatness of our country, a sense of the meaning of its past and of the possibilities of its future, is shown in his *Psalm of the West*. He can speak out strongly and boldly too, as in *The Symphony*, against that taint of business dishonesty and those too-material aims which are corrupting the life of our Republic. Few poets have dealt with this side of our modern life at once so truthfully and so poetically; few have shown a deeper sympathy with the cramped lives of the poor, shut in too often from those

“ Outside leagues of liberty,
Where Art, sweet lark, translates the sky
Into a heavenly melody.”

The true poet of the South, he is the poet of a chivalrous reverence for women; the poet of all high emotions. He it was who sang

“ When life's all love, 'tis life : aught else,
'tis naught.”

He is a foe to the hard intellect unsanctified by love and tenderness; a foe to the mercenary and the base. Under the open sky, by the corn-field, or in the clover of the Pennsylvania meadows, he protests against the hardness, the sharpness, the mercantile spirit, that debases our American life. To love of nature, love of country, and love of man Lanier adds a power of poetic expression which at times is both fine and true. As has been said, he did not reach the limit of his powers or the full mastery of his art, yet he has shown us in his *Revenge of Hamish* that he could rival the best of our poets in the ballad-form; and in such lyrics as the songs in *The Jacquerie*, *My Springs*, and in *The Song of the Chattahoochee* he has given us single poems worthy to endure. With all its shortcomings, Lanier's work is a noble and beautiful addition to American poetry, the full worth of which is not yet generally recognized, and there is none among all our poets whose life is more stainless, more lofty, and more inspiring. He unites the Southern warmth to the Northern intellect, and if the coming writers of the great region to which he belongs bring

to their work an equal self-consecration to high ideals; if they strive, as he did, to strengthen the full Southern nature with the rigid discipline of thought and knowledge,—we may have a work accomplished which this poet of the new South left but begun; we shall have a literature more glowing, more passionate, and perhaps even more enduring than that of the New England school.

STUDY LIST

LANIER

1. **Poems.**—"The Song of the Chattahoochee," "Tampa Robins," "Revenge of Hamish," "My Springs," "The Ship of Earth," "The Psalm of the West," "Song for 'The Jacquerie':" "*The hound was cuffed, the hound was kicked*"; "Corn."

2. **Biography and Criticism.**—Life, by Edwin Mims; *Lanier*, by Wm. Malone Baskervill (in the series entitled "Southern Writers," published by Barbee & Smith, Nashville); Memorial, by Wm. Hayes Ward, prefixed to edition of Lanier's *Poems*, edited by his wife; Article by Merrill E. Gates, in the *Presbyterian Review*, vol. viii., p. 669; C. W. Hubner, *Representative Southern Poets*; T. W. Higginson, in *Contemporaries*; Richard Le Gallienne, "Sidney Lanier, an English Appreciation," in *Attitudes and Avowals*; F. V. N. Painter, in *Poets of the South*.

CHAPTER IV

THE LATER WRITERS OF THE MIDDLE STATES

WE must now return to that middle region of our country in which, as we have seen, the higher and more enduring literature of the Republic had its beginning. It will be remembered that the leading writers of this section, Irving, Cooper, Bryant, and their associates, who were the true founders of our national literature, did not end their work until about the middle of the century. Cooper, who died in 1851, was the first of this great triumvirate to depart. Bryant, who lived on, the patriarch of American letters, until 1878, was the last. These Middle States pioneers thus lived to see the sudden appearance of the yet greater school of writers in New England, and the fight against adverse conditions made by the rising literature of the South.

It helps us to take a broad view of the literary history of our nation as a whole when we reflect that Cooper wrote for nearly a quarter of a century after the appearance of Longfellow's first published book of poems (1826), and that Bryant lived fourteen years

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tions.

after the death of Hawthorne, and no less than twenty-nine years after that of Poe. A careful study of chronology will make it plain that, although they belonged to an earlier generation than that of Emerson or of Poe, these pioneer writers of the Middle States and the literary leaders of New England and the South yet worked for a considerable period side by side. It is all the more necessary for us to remind ourselves of this, because the method of study which we have followed tends to create a different impression in our minds.

In order to show the independent life and growth of literature during the present century in these different sections of our country we have been obliged to consider successively the literature of the Middle States, New England, and the South. But literature did not perish in New York and Pennsylvania when it triumphantly asserted itself in New England, and its advance in New England was largely contemporaneous with its contest against many difficulties in Virginia and the South. In time yet another literature was added to that of the three older sections—the literature of the growing West; and all these have developed separately, yet connected by those underlying bonds which render them in many ways so truly one. So we have at least four sections, each having its distinct literature and its distinct intellectual life, and each having its share in the wider and more varied movement of American literature as a whole. As we thus survey the whole field of our literary activity, during a period of some twenty or

thirty years after the middle of the century, we see New England first at the height of its power, then gradually losing to some extent its leading place; we see New York distanced, yet continuing to produce work of a high order; we see the South, and finally the West, pressing forward and widening the area of our literary production.

In the middle section the early leaders were not without successors. With the possible exception of Walt Whitman, some of these later men were equal to any one of the three great writers who preceded them, yet they continued, in their own way, the work of those whose labors were nearly done. Pennsylvania gave four poets, born in "four successive years"—T. BUCHANAN READ (1822-1872), GEORGE HENRY BOKER (1823-1890), CHARLES GODFREY LELAND (1824-1903), and BAYARD TAYLOR (1825-1878).

Read, a landscape-painter, who passed much of his life abroad, composed, besides many larger works, some really notable short poems.

T. Buchanan
Read.

His *Sheridan's Ride* is among the most popular of our war-poems, but two lyrics, *Drifting* and *The Closing Scene*, have a far higher poetic beauty. The last-named poem, with its subdued autumnal tone, has a grace and finish which remind us of the refined and delicate verse of Collins or of Gray.

Boker was a Philadelphian, long prominently identified with its literary life. He wrote creditable sonnets and some good lyrics; a number of his poems were inspired by the Civil War. He is also favorably known by his plays.

George
Henry
Boker.

Francesca da Rimini

His work as dramatist places him with the very few recent English poets who have succeeded in producing dramas which while not deficient in poetic excellence yet meet the actual requirements of stage representation.

Leland, also a Philadelphian, owes his popularity chiefly to the *Hans Breitman Ballads*, a collection of amusing verses of rather transient interest, in the broken English of a German-American. C. G.
Leland.

Bayard Taylor, the youngest of this group, is in many ways the most notable. He was born in 1825, in Chester County, a region in the neighborhood of Philadelphia, of thriving farms with comfortable farm-houses solidly built of gray stone, and of capacious barns. The district had been early settled by the English Quakers, and its people, with the thrift, simplicity, and inflexible uprightness of the Quaker, were not free from the rigidity and the narrowness in matters of art which characterize the members of that sect. "They hung no pictures on their blank walls, nor listened to the touches of sweet harmony. No line of beauty ever disturbed the peace and the decorum of their sober meeting-houses." * Taylor came of a long line of Quaker ancestry, but he was also partly German by descent. He himself thought that it was this foreign element in his inheritance, this "strain of distant and dead generations," that asserted itself in him, filling

* Smyth's *Life of Bayard Taylor*, p. 7. American Men of Letters Series.

him with warmer life and strange longings, and making him impatient even from his boyhood of the narrow horizon and bare lives of those about him. From whatever cause, in the midst of the ordered quiet and monotonous toil of a provincial community, this Quaker farmer's boy was eager to know and to see; impatient to grasp all that life had to give. When he was but ten years old the longing to visit foreign lands had already taken possession of him; by the time he was nineteen this longing had become a definite purpose. Through some newspaper verses he got a foothold in literary circles, and he became further known by the publication in 1844 of *Ximena*, a small book of poems. Determined to see Europe, he succeeded, probably more by his energy than because of these literary ventures, in inducing several newspaper editors to engage him to write them letters from abroad. Some of them paid him in advance, and with only about one hundred and forty dollars he started on his tour. It was a daring venture; it meant privation and self-denial, but in Taylor's case it meant also sudden success and fame. He was abroad two years, travelling on foot and paying his way by his letters to the *New York Tribune* and other papers, — a crude, courageous, eager-hearted country-boy, thrown on his own resources, and educating himself by all that he felt and saw and all that he overcame. The literary outcome of this astonishing trip was his *Views Afoot, or Europe seen with Knapsack and Staff* (1846), the first of his many books of travel, and the beginning also of his literary success. The book tells

the story of Taylor's adventurous wanderings with simplicity and directness. It shows the quick power of the reporter to observe, and of the poet to appreciate; but, more than all, it is an object-lesson in what can be accomplished by sheer pluck and strength of will. The public were quick to see its merits, and six editions were sold in the first year.

In 1847 Taylor settled in New York, joining that circle of literati in which Bryant, Willis, and Halleck were the ruling spirits, and thus taking his place in the literary succession. Cooper still lived in his home near Otsego Lake, and Irving at Sunnyside was not far from the metropolis. Taylor's life during the years that followed was one of restless and varied activity, full of tireless labor and keen enjoyments. He toiled at journalism; he became widely and favorably known as a popular lecturer; he wrote books of travel, novels, and poems. "His intellect," says Professor Smyth, "was of that activity that it gave him trouble not to work."* But from time to time he would vanish from out the circle of these familiar interests, and disappear into the strange life of other lands. In 1851 he made a memorable journey to the East, pushing his way far up the Nile into regions then but little known, journeying, a bronzed and bearded traveller, through Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor. "I have a Southern soul, it seems," he wrote in his Diary, "for I feel strongest and happiest where the sun can blaze upon me."† He was an ideal traveller,

* Smyth's *Life of Bayard Taylor*, p. 184.

† Quoted in Smyth's *Life of Taylor*, p. 90.

and in the course of his roving life he visited India, China, Japan, and Arabia, and made his way through Norway and Lapland into the regions of the far North. His energies were dissipated on many ambitions. As he grew older, he aspired, as Walter Scott had done, to found a great home for his family. He built a large house at "Cedar croft," in his native Chester County, only, like Scott, to burden himself with debt.

Under all his varied interests, his deepest wish was to prove himself a great poet; but although he published many poems, to the public he was pre-eminently the explorer, lecturer, and writer of travels. Some of his most ambitious poetry was produced during his later years. His translation of Goethe's *Faust* (1870-1871) has become a classic, and the notes and comments are a monument to his minute and scholarly study of the great German poet. This work alone would entitle Taylor to be long remembered. Two poems of this period, *The Prophet* (1874) and *Prince Deukalion* (1878), though among the longest and most ambitious of Taylor's poetical compositions, have added little to his reputation. The last great project of his life was to write a life of Goethe, a task for which he was singularly fitted, and his appointment in 1877 as minister to Berlin seemed to open the way for the carrying out of this undertaking. But when leisure and opportunity seemed thus at last at his command, his splendid health, which had carried him buoyantly through a lifetime of toil and hardships, at length deserted him, and he died at Berlin, December 15, 1878, leaving his work undone.

Taylor impresses us as a man who would probably have reached a yet higher level in literature if he had possessed a greater singleness of aim. His temperament was inquiring, free, and Taylor's
work. ardent; from the narrowness of provincial life he came early into contact with half the civilizations of the world. Most of his life was given to an endeavor to enlarge his range of experience, and to the receiving of those new impressions which crowded in on him from every side. Successful in many fields, overburdened by the pressure of work, and distracted by the variety of his objects, we need not wonder that he did not reach in poetry that full measure of success for which he longed. "His life," says Mr. Stedman, "was consecrated to poetry, yet not devoted to it";* but the highest rewards of the poet may not be thus lightly won. Taylor himself seems to have realized that he had allowed himself to be turned aside too often from his highest calling, for he writes regretfully,

"And still some cheaper service claims
The will that leaps to loftier call;
Some cloud is cast on splendid aims,
On power achieved some common thrall." †

Whatever Taylor might have done in poetry under other conditions, or if his life had been prolonged, he has undoubtedly done enough to win for himself a highly creditable standing among our poets of the second rank. As a rule, his verse, while easy and melodious, lacks concentration and individuality. We meet nothing that jars upon our ear or offends our taste, but we find little that arrests our attention

* *Poets of America*, p. 409.

† *Poems: Implora Pace.*

or that remains with us long after the book is closed. Yet certain poems of Taylor's have in full measure that indefinable poetic quality which we often miss. The fruits of his later wanderings, the *Poems of the Orient*, are full of beauty. The famous *Bedouin Song* in this series ranks with the best of our lyrics, and *Nubia* is among the masterpieces of sonnet literature. The *Song of the Camp* and other shorter poems show that Taylor at his best was a true poet; indeed it is probable that the mass of his inferior work has done much to obscure his real merit and to prevent his receiving his due. Among the longer works, *Lars, a Pastoral of Norway*, may be mentioned as a most charming idyllic poem, worthy to be placed beside *Evangeline*. In spite of the immense popularity that Taylor's travels enjoyed in their day, in spite of the fact that his best novel, *The Story of Kennet*, deals truthfully with a phase of Pennsylvania life which has had but little recognition from the story-writer, it is by his best work in poetry that Taylor is likely to be longest remembered.

Besides the group of poets just spoken of, the Middle States produced during this period some distinguished scholars and prose-writers. Among the earliest of these was

Prose-writing and scholarship. HENRY REED (1808-1854), who was lost in the wreck of the ocean steamer Arctic, and who held a professorship at the University of Pennsylvania from 1835 until his untimely death. Professor Reed was a sympathetic and enthusiastic student of English literature; his sense of what was

excellent in poetry was quick and delicate, and he did much to enlarge and refine our literary appreciation. He was among the first, if not actually the first, of American critics to appreciate the charm of Wordsworth's poetry, and his friendship with both Wordsworth and Coleridge made him peculiarly fitted to interpret the work of these poets and their theory of composition. His edition of Wordsworth, which first appeared in 1837, did much to make the poet better known to American readers. He also edited the poems of Gray, and several other standard English works. After Reed's death several of his courses of lectures on literary subjects were published under the supervision of his brother.

Our present plan of study excludes extended criticism of special students, but two scholars of this middle region cannot be passed over altogether without mention. HENRY C. LEA (1825-1909), a Philadelphian, is the author of *A History of the Inquisition during the Middle Ages* (1888), and of other mediæval studies. HORACE HOWARD FURNESS (1833-1912), also a Philadelphian, holds a prominent place among Shakespearean students. His Variorum Edition of Shakespeare's plays, which has been in course of publication since 1870, is a splendid monument to American scholarship, and is generally accepted on both sides of the Atlantic as the best planned and most complete edition of England's greatest poet. Side by side with the work of Dr. Furness we may place that of THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY (b. New York, 1838), whose scholarly study of Chaucer

is a noteworthy addition to the literature which has gathered around Shakespeare's great predecessor in English poetry.

Among these Middle States writers is one who claims exemption from all ordinary standards, a man whom it is equally impossible to classify or
 Walt Whitman. to put aside—WALT WHITMAN, the most unique and puzzling figure in American letters. Somehow there suddenly appeared out of the business activity and dead-level prosperity of this equable middle region a man who is believed by his admirers to be the greatest poet, the most genuine voice, of our democracy. He had, as Bayard Taylor thought, "a colossal egotism." He aspired to "define America, her athletic democracy" to foreign lands, to teach her what she veritably is and what she may become. He declared that these new States needed a new poetry, untainted by the feudalism and the worn-out beliefs inseparable from the literatures of Europe; he abandoned the established forms and settled traditions of his art, and spoke out his message in an irregular, half-rhythmical chant according to a fashion of his own, unrestrained, audacious, vociferous, demanding the attention and calmly challenging the judgment of the world. In his eyes his poetic contemporaries were weaklings and sentimentalists. "Do you call these genteel little creatures American poets?" he asks.* He longs for a poetry as large, strong-limbed, free, elemental, and democratic as the genius of our Republic.

* *Democratic Vistas.*

In his first poem he thus triumphantly announces his own arrival:

“No dolce effectuosso I;

Bearded, sunburnt, gray-neck'd, forbidding, I have arrived,
To be wrestled with as I pass for the solid prizes of the universe.”

He belongs to no school and bows to no precedents; he is the declared enemy to all conventions:

“I wear my hat as I please, indoors or out.”

We cannot account for him, or tell from whence he comes; we only know that in some way he appears,—“untamed,” as he asserts, and “untranslatable,”—to sound his “barbaric yawp over the roofs of the world.” It is now nearly half a century since Whitman made his startling, not to say theatrical, entrance, yet the man and his work remain to be “wrestled with.” There has grown up about him an ever-increasing mass of controversy and criticism. In this country John Burroughs has hailed him as the poet-prophet of our age and country; in England his work has been received with enthusiasm by such cultured and fastidious critics as William Michael Rossetti and John Addington Symonds. He has had neglect, ridicule, and abuse; but the circle of his devotees, though small, is probably increasing. To the vast body of readers his work is still repellent, bewildering, or altogether unknown. His poetry defies all ordinary critical tests, and the legitimate differences of opinion in regard to it are still so great that his ultimate place in our literature remains uncertain.

It certainly seems as though Whitman were fitted in one respect to be the poet of our people. None of our great writers lived in such a free, intimate, and daily relationship with the laborers in the factory, the shop, or the field; none came in a more simple or natural contact with the average man. Whitman belonged to the people, not merely through sympathy, but by his birth and habit of life. He was born at West Hills, Long Island, in 1819. He came of sound but humble ancestry, partly English and partly Dutch. His father, a carpenter by trade, removed to Brooklyn while Whitman was yet a child, and there the boy attended the public school until he was thirteen. He learned type-setting, and for twelve years of his young manhood worked as a compositor in New York. His eager, inquiring contact with the varied life of a great city during this time was his real education. New York was his university. With a marvellous power of observation and sympathy he explored and absorbed the life which surged about him. "He went on equal terms with every one," says his biographer; "he liked them and they him, and he knew them far better than they knew themselves."* He thus realized the idea of human friendliness which he suggests in one of his poems:

"Stranger, if you passing meet me and desire to speak to me,
 why should you not speak to me?
 And why should I not speak to you?"

* Bucke's *Life of Whitman*, p. 19.

To this knowledge of life in New York a yet wider experience was added. In 1849 he started on a leisurely progress through the Southern, Western, and Middle States. He was a part of much of the life he saw, for from time to time he settled down and earned enough money to enable him to continue his journey. On his return to Brooklyn he was newspaper editor and house-builder, but he worked merely to provide for his daily needs; his real ambition was to speak out what was in him. His force accordingly went into the writing of his first poem, *Leaves of Grass*, which appeared in 1855. The book, which was slow in gaining any notice, was helped forward by a very favorable opinion from Emerson.

Whitman had now studied our democracy in all the daily avocations of peace; his next great experience of it came through our Civil War. His brother, who was in the Federal army, was wounded at the opening of the struggle, and Whitman left Brooklyn to attend him. After some experiences at the front, Whitman was nurse for several years in the army hospitals at Washington, injuring his magnificent health by his devotion. The war and Whitman's experiences in it were the occasion of several books. *Drum-Taps*, which contains some of his best poetry, appeared in 1865, and his *Memoranda During the War* ten years later. After the close of the war Whitman remained at Washington until 1873, as clerk in one of the Government offices, but was stricken with paralysis in that year and compelled to give up his position. A long period of invalidism and poverty followed, during

which he bore himself with a cheerful serenity, wonderful in a man who had delighted in the abundant energy of a superb physique. In 1874 he moved to Camden, New Jersey, and there lived simply and obscurely until his death in 1892.

There was about Whitman something robust, large, and primitive. His early education was inadequate, and he was not a wide reader at any time; but he loved and knew men and nature, and lived in a wonderful companionship with them. Intensely individual by conviction as well as by his disposition, he was comparatively shut off from that life which comes to us through books. Whatever the defects of his work, we feel back of it, if we read it not in parts but as a whole, the imperative pressure of a strong if often wilfully eccentric personality. Confused, incoherent, full of offenses against taste and art, with outlandish words, slang, and elementary French phrases floating as on a weltering sea of words, we yet feel under all an indefinable sense of personal power.

Whitman feels himself, and in his own strange fashion makes us feel, the greatness and wonder of America. "These United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem," he wrote in his preface to *Leaves of Grass*. Their "crowning glory," he says elsewhere, "is to be spiritual and heroic." * Such a realization of what we are and may be is unfortunately rare in us and in our

Whitman's
work.

His view of
life.

* *A Backward Glance o'er Travelled Roads.*

literature. This feeling for our country, the greatest political expression of democracy, was nearly related to Whitman's intense belief in the importance of the individual. He aimed to be the poet of the "average man"; he believed that the essence of life consists in the free development of each individual. But while he insists on the sacredness of the individual, he emphasizes with equal force the sacredness of those bonds which should bind all individuals together. Perhaps more than anything else, he is the poet of that great ideal of human brotherhood which lies at the base of a true democracy. It is his aim to sing "the song of companionship," to write "the evangel poem of comrades." He declares that "the main purpose of these States is to found a superb friendship," up to this time "latent in all men."

How far Whitman succeeded in expressing these and other large conceptions in an artistic form is yet an open question. There is no doubt that at times he is exceedingly felicitous in his use of words, and that many passages in his poems unite a remarkable beauty with a subtle rhythmical charm. On the other hand, if we call the great bulk of his work poetry, it must be not merely by enlarging the borders of poetic art, but by reconstructing our fundamental conceptions of the nature of poetry itself. Two examples of his peculiar manner may be given: one, of his favorite method of cataloguing places or objects in an interminable succession; the other, of the purely prosaic character of his ordi-

**His poetic
form.**

nary phraseology. In a passage on the *Broad-Axe* he tells us what the axe can make:

"The axe leaps!
 The solid forest gives fluid utterances;
 They tumble forth, they rise and form,
 Hut, tent, landing, survey,
 * * * * * *
 Hoe, rake, pitchfork, pencil, wagon, staff,
 Saw, jack-plane, wedge, mallet, rounce,"—

and so on in a pitiless enumeration, until we feel that he has confused the function of the poet with the duties of an invoice-clerk. The other passage is taken almost at random from the same poem:

"To use the hammer or the saw (*rip or cross-cut*),
 To cultivate a turn for carpentering, plastering, painting."

These instances do not show Whitman at his best, yet they fairly represent the average quality of hundreds of pages. If they have any touch of poetry in them, the world's poetic sense has been perverted from the days of Homer until now.

A hardly less serious shortcoming is the overstrained, incoherent vein of rhapsody in which Whitman's work abounds. One of his ablest admirers, John Addington Symonds, admits that his most serious fault is a kind of "forceible feebleness."* In much of Whitman's work we find merely a weak diffuseness, a boisterous violence and extravagance of expression, instead of the compactness, precision, and quiet reserve of a true strength. The power in Whitman's poetry impresses us as the native force and

* *Walt Whitman. A Study*, p. 141.

sincerity of the man, painfully struggling to make itself felt through a clumsy and inadequate means of expression.

In judging either of Whitman or of his theories of art it is not enough to admit that there is an element of power in the man himself, that his views are sometimes inspiring or his aims high: we must rather ask whether he has the poet's gift of musical and beautiful speech, the power to create that which will permanently delight, uplift, and console? It is not enough to say that Whitman is an original genius because he differs from all other poets; it is easier to differ from the great poets than to resemble them. It is easy for a writer to mistake a studied eccentricity for originality; but we must remember that something more is required than a departure from the ordinary principles of composition in order to create a literature that shall be truly national, and that to violate any essential principle of poetic art is to violate the immortal laws of beauty on which it rests. That Whitman is different is in itself neither for nor against him; the ultimate test of his work will be in its power to move men.

Assuming to be the poet of our democracy, Whitman's work is in fact as utterly removed from the people as he himself was close to them in his daily life. The scholars Longfellow and Lowell are the poets of thousands of humble homes; Whitman is as yet the admiration of a little clique among the most cultured upper class. Called the founder of a national American literature, by a singular irony he is better known

to the intellectual aristocracy of England than among the people of his own land. Whether he will ever be our poet as Burns is the poet of Scotland, is a matter for individual judgment. In the meantime it may help us to apply to him his own test:

"The proof of a poet should be sternly deferred till his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it."

STUDY LIST.

TAYLOR AND WHITMAN.

1. **Bayard Taylor.** (a) Among the shorter poems "The Bedouin Song," "Nubia," the classical study "Hylas," and "A Song of the Camp" may be read as favorable examples of Taylor's poetic powers. "The Quaker Widow" is interesting as an idyllic presentation of a phase of life not often treated in our verse. The longer narrative poem "Lars: A Pastoral of Norway" should not be passed over. It is a beautiful study of the life in Norway and in Taylor's own section of Pennsylvania; the fierce primitive passions and rude customs of Norwegian life are contrasted with the placid and peace-loving existence of the Quakers. The story is well told, and the poem abounds in admirable descriptions of nature. "Views Afoot" will give a fair idea of Taylor's ability as a writer of travels, and "The Story of Kennet" of his work as a novelist.

(b) **BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.** The best life of Taylor is that by Albert H. Smyth in the American Men of Letters Series (1896). See also *The Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor*, by Marie Hansen Taylor and Horace E. Scudder, and, especially for criticism, Stedman's *Poets of America*.

2. **Walt Whitman.** (a) **POEMS.**—Whitman's work is so diffuse, voluminous, and unequal that it will be found best

to approach him through one of the volumes of Selections, in which we are given examples of his best manner only. Any one or all of the following selected editions of his poems will be found convenient: *Poems; Selected and Edited by William Michael Rossetti* (with a critical introduction by the editor), London, 1880; *Selected Poems by Walt Whitman* (Webster & Co., 1892); *Selected Poems* in the Camelot Classics, with an introduction by Ernest Rhys. Among the poems or selections worthy of especial notice the following may be mentioned: "O Captain! my Captain," a lament on the death of Lincoln, one of the best known of Whitman's poems, and one of the most regular in its poetic form; "The Mystic Trumpeter," "Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking," "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd," "Pioneers! O Pioneers," which deals, as its name implies, with the great westward migration, shows Whitman's large feeling for country. The "Beat! Beat! Drums!" from "Drum-taps," is full of martial vigor and spirit, while the "Come Up from the Fields, Father," a pathetic study of simple home-life, shows the war from another aspect.

(b) PROSE.—*Specimen Days in America*, in the Camelot Classic Series, is convenient as an introduction to a study of Whitman's prose. The account of his experience in the Washington hospitals in this book gives us some idea of that tenderness and strength which undoubtedly formed a part of Whitman's singular, and in some respects disappointing, character. *Democratic Vistas*, the preface to the *Leaves of Grass*, and *A Backward Glance O'er Travelled Roads*, help us to understand Whitman's views on poetry as an art, and on American literature and society. See also *Autobiographia; or the Story of a Life*, by Walt Whitman. Selected from his prose writings (Webster & Co., 1892).

(c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM. Only a few books from

the growing mass of Whitman literature need be given here. Bliss Perry's *Walt Whitman, His Life and Work*; Life, by G. R. Carpenter, English Men of Letters Series. The Life by Richard Maurice Bucke (1883) ranks high as an authority. John Burroughs, who writes as a personal friend as well as an enthusiastic admirer of the poet, has given us his critical views and personal impressions in *Walt Whitman as Poet and Person*, and *Whitman: a Study* (1896). Among the many essays on this subject we may mention that of J. A. Symonds, entitled "Democratic Art, with Special Reference to Walt Whitman," in *Essays Speculative and Suggestive*, vol. ii.; also *Walt Whitman, a Study*, by the same author; T. W. Higginson, "Walt Whitman," in *Contemporaries*; and Edward Dowden's "The Poet of Democracy," in *Studies in Literature*.

CHAPTER V

GENERAL SURVEY OF LITERATURE SINCE THE CIVIL WAR

INNUMERABLE books, some good, some bad, thousands without any distinctive merits of thought or style, have been published in the United States since the close of the Civil War. Whatever fault may be found with our recent literature, it will at least be generally admitted that we have had no dearth of writers or of readers. The times have indeed changed since Governor Berkeley thanked God for the absence of the printing press in Virginia. From the Atlantic to the Pacific, the printing presses are busy among us; books, newspapers, monthly, semi-monthly, and weekly periodicals, multiply and flourish; circulating libraries help to distribute the rising flood of popular literature, and the American novelist who writes what is known as a "best seller" addresses a reading public that is at least as large, as profitable, and probably as fickle, as any body of readers in the world. It is true that the permanent value of a nation's literature depends upon the quality and not upon the quantity of its literary product. A few immortal verses, such as Milton's *Lycidas* or Grey's *Elegy*, outweigh thousands of those much-

advertised books of the day that are too often hastily written, superficially read, and easily forgotten. Yet while all this is evident, the mere quantity of our literature, apart from its quality, is a fact worthy of notice. What is the significance of this great horde of writers, these hundreds of thousands of eager readers? It means that with us literature has become more *democratic*; that books are not produced by a small class of scholarly or cultivated writers, for the benefit of a small circle of cultivated readers; it means that, for better or for worse, books are being written by the people and for the people, and that American literature is becoming more and more a direct and honest expression of American life.

In reviewing the course of our literature since the close of the Civil War, we will confine our attention to some of its most obvious and striking features. We are too close to this recent period of our literary history to see it clearly; and if it were possible to pronounce a final judgment on what has been accomplished, we must remember that the story of our literature is but just begun. Time alone can reveal the true meaning of much that we see about us; time alone can test all this mass of printed matter that we call American literature, and, after much that we now read has been forgotten, show us the few books that are worthy to remain. Yet while we can only speak in very general terms of this recent literature, it would be a great mistake to pass it over altogether. No period in the history of our literature is fuller

of interest; none so calculated to set us thinking seriously about ourselves, what we have done, and what we are likely to do, as these years since the Civil War. The glory of English literature is in its past; the interest of American literature lies largely in its possible future. That future is being shaped from day to day, and, when we study the life and the literature around us, our thoughts naturally turn from the present to the significance and the promise of what we see. With this thought of the future as well as of the past, we will then review some of the characteristics of our recent literature, and note, so far as we can, the direction in which it is moving.

LITERATURE IN NEW ENGLAND

One of the first facts to impress us, as we review the general trend of our literature since 1865, is that New England, while she has produced some capable writers during this recent period, has not maintained that almost undisputed leadership which she held at the close of the War. In 1865, nearly all the great writers of the New England school,—Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, Holmes, Motley, Parkman, and some others,—were still living. These men were still a power in the national life, but although they were in the fullness of their fame, they had passed middle age, and the larger part of their work was already done. Longfellow and Emerson died in 1882, Lowell nine, and Whittier ten years later,

and at the close of the nineteenth century only a few writers of the great period of New England literature survived. It was on this remarkable group that the supremacy of New England depended, and as one by one these men finished their labors, and as no group of younger writers of equal genius and power rose up to take their place, the literary supremacy of New England slowly but inevitably declined. In saying this we must be careful to recognize that New England, and especially Massachusetts, continues to hold a high place in our intellectual and literary life. The traditions of scholarship and culture are strong among the New Englanders, and if her later writers have failed on the whole to reach the high level of their immediate predecessors, if there has been no peer of Hawthorne, Emerson, or Lowell, there have been many competent scholars, and a number of accomplished and successful writers.

In point of time, THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH (1836-1907) holds an intermediate place between the Golden

T. B. Aldrich. Age of New England literature, and the younger men who did not become known until after the Civil War. Aldrich was about twenty years younger than Lowell, and about thirty years younger than Longfellow, yet at least one of his poems was already widely known before the opening of the war. Aldrich was born in Portsmouth, the old seaport town of New Hampshire, which he has described as "Rivermouth" in his *Story of a Bad Boy*. Like Emerson, Longfellow, Hawthorne, and so

many of his great predecessors, he came of an old colonial family and was sprung from sound English stock. The death of his father obliged Aldrich, who was then a boy of sixteen, to give up the idea of going to Harvard, and he accepted a clerkship with his uncle, a commission merchant in New York. But the boy had in him the soul of a true artist. He had already contributed verses to the poet's corner of the *Portsmouth Journal*, and he had the artist's pleasure in fashioning something rare and delicate in words. In New York he continued to write verses for the newspapers, and in 1855 published a little book of poems, *The Bells: a collection of Chimes*. In the same year, when he was only nineteen, he wrote a poem which touched the heart of the country, and which is still inseparably connected with his name, *The Ballad of Babie Bell*. Strangely enough, this dreamy, musical, tender poem, with its feeling for the sacred mystery of childhood, and for the wonder of life and death, was written on the backs of bills of lading and first published in *The Journal of Commerce*. Aldrich was to write later in a stronger and simpler manner, but while there may be superficial blemishes here and there in *Babie Bell*, it reaches below the surface of life to that basis of human nature which is in us all.

The success of *Babie Bell* seems to have encouraged Aldrich to abandon business for literature. For some years he made his way in New York as poet and journalist, and in 1866 he moved to Boston to edit

a weekly paper for the famous firm of Ticknor and Fields. For nine years (1881-1890) he edited the *Atlantic Monthly*, the magazine in which so much of the best literature of New England had first appeared, and during all this time his reputation steadily increased. Soon after he settled in Boston, he began to win a high place as a prose-writer as well as a poet. He wrote a number of short stories, among them his whimsical and fascinating *Marjorie Daw*, probably the best known and best loved of them all. He also wrote several novels, and *The Story of a Bad Boy*, in which he recalls his boyhood in the "old town by the sea."

Aldrich was above all a careful and finished writer. He revered his art, and in all that he wrote, whether it was prose or verse, we find the same fine, fastidious taste, the same delicate feeling for the right word, the same determination to clothe the thought in the most perfect form. He held that:—

"The workmanship wherewith the gold is wrought
Adds yet a richness to the richest gold,
Who lacks the art to shape his thought, I hold,
Were little poorer if he lacked the thought."

All that he did was done well; but Aldrich had not the strong creative power, the depth, energy, or passion for large designs. He seems, indeed, rather like the refined and exquisite product of an old civilization, rather like the cultured singer of an old world, than the strong, impetuous voice of the new. Yet

by nature, Aldrich had humor, tenderness, a true perception of beauty, and a charm that cannot be defined. The gifts that were his he used faithfully and well, and not a few of his shorter poems have a subtle suggestiveness, a grace and beauty which entitle them to a place among the lyrical classics of the language.

On the whole poetry has not flourished in latter-day New England. Like Aldrich, Celia Loughton, better known by her married name of CELIA THAXTER, was born in Portsmouth in 1836. Mrs. Thaxter, who passed a great part of her life on the Isle of Shoals and the New Hampshire coast, did some good work in prose and verse, and some of her shorter poems, such as *The Sand-piper* and *A Tryst*, though slight, possess unmistakable poetic feeling. Another poet of later New England, EDWARD ROWLAND SILL (1841-1887), has enriched our literature with some sonnets and short poems of unusual power and depth of thought. Though born in Connecticut, the greater part of the productive period of Sill's life was spent in the far West. He was for a time professor in the University of California, but his early death in Ohio cut short a career full of promise. But he was essentially a New Englander from first to last. He was not an imitator of Emerson,—indeed his verse has a distinctly individual note,—but he expressed after his own fashion that inner spirit of New England that we find also in Emerson's verse. He has the same

Recent
poetry.

deep love of Nature, and his work is pervaded by that high seriousness and philosophic depth which is characteristic alike of Emerson and of the would-be emancipated Puritanism, of which he was the representative. Sill left but little verse, yet he left enough to show us that in him we lost a true poet, filled with noble ideals of life and beauty, and endowed with the faculty of insight into the heart of things. There are other poets of recent New England, whose work cannot be adequately treated in a general survey. Among these we may mention GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY (1855-), widely known as an essayist and literary critic, as well as a poet; LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON (1835-); LOUISE IMOGEN GUINEX (1861-).

In the field of fiction recent New England is represented by such well-known writers as ELIZABETH
 Recent fiction. STUART PHELPS WARD (1844-), the author of *Gates Ajar* (1868), one of the most widely read books of the time; HARRIET PRESCOTT SPOFFORD (1835-); SARAH ORNE JEWETT (1849-1909), and MARY E. WILKINS FREEMAN (1862-), who had become famous before her marriage with Dr. Freeman as Mary E. Wilkins. Several of these novelists, notably Sarah Orne Jewett and Mary E. Wilkins Freeman, have excelled in the presentation of the more humble and commonplace aspects of New England life, particularly the narrow, self-centered life of the country districts and the smaller towns. Miss Jewett's sketches of rural New

England are probably more varied, and on a somewhat larger scale than those of Mrs. Freeman, whose little pictures of village life in such a book as *A Humble Romance* (1887) have the minute accuracy, the exquisite finish, and the narrow scope, of a miniature. Indeed it is this narrow range of Mrs. Freeman's most characteristic sketches; it is her sympathetic portrayal of provincial characters, in whose eyes the trivial happenings of daily life take on a vast importance, and to whom the wider outlook and the larger emotions are almost unknown; it is her understanding of the meager repressed life in the odd corners of New England, with its pathetic incompleteness, its unsuspected touch of romance; it is this that gives a peculiar value and suggestiveness to her work.

The stories, verses, and sketches of HELEN HUNT JACKSON (1831-1885), who frequently wrote under the signature of "H. H.," gave her an assured place among the authors of her time. She is probably best known by her novel *Ramona*, which deals with the picturesque life and bitter wrongs of the Mission Indians of southern California, and which has been called (with some exaggeration) "*The Uncle Tom's Cabin of the Indian.*"

ARTHUR SHERBURNE HARDY (1847-), a college professor and diplomat, author of *But yet a Woman* (1883) and *Passe Rose* (1889), has written novels notable for their strength and their finish of style; while BLANCHE WILLIS HOWARD (1847-1898), whose

entertaining story *One Summer* was most favorably received, produced in *Guenn* (a tragic story of artist life in Brittany) a novel of strength and intensity unusual in latter-day New England fiction.

ROBERT GRANT (1852-) holds a very high, if not the highest place, among the novelists of contemporary New England. Grant is a Bostonian, a graduate of Harvard, a lawyer, and, since 1893, a Judge of the Probate Court. As a young man he caught the attention of the reading public by some clever and satirical verses, *The Little Tin Gods on Wheels* (1879), and since then he has embodied his keen observations and shrewd reflections on life and manners in a long succession of books. These books, humorous, penetrating, and kindly, faithfully report their author's observations at different stages of his own experience; as a young Harvard graduate and society man, as bachelor, as a married man, as a philosopher, until we reach *The Confessions of a Grandfather*. *Unleavened Bread* (1904), one of the best of his books, is a thoughtful study of the immaturity and provincialism of American life in the newer parts of the country, sections deficient alike in solid knowledge and artistic experience, yet self-confident with all the imperious assurance of ignorance. But above all, Judge Grant is the exponent and critic of the New England of his own time, and latter-day Boston lives in his story of *The Chippendales* (1909).

There are many other writers of recent New Eng-

land who have won recognition as scholars, historians, philosophers, essayists, or literary critics.

JOHN FISKE (1842-1901), a scientist and **Historians and critics.**

philosophical thinker, became widely known for his books on American history; and JUSTIN WINSOR (1831-1897), the author of a scholarly and elaborate history of America; HENRY ADAMS (1838-), JAMES SCHOULER (1839-), and HENRY CABOT LODGE (1850-), are among those who have worked successfully in the same field. WILLIAM JAMES (1842-), who, though born in New York, became identified with New England through his long and brilliant professorship at Harvard, won a high place in philosophy; and N. S. SHALER (1841-), a native of Kentucky, and like James a Harvard professor, gained a similar distinction in science. But the work of such students, while it shows the intellectual activity that has centered at Cambridge, can hardly be called literature in the strictest meaning of the word. Both James and Shaler wrote many important books, but not a few of the distinguished scholars of contemporary New England have, unlike Lowell, been students and teachers rather than makers of literature. We find, however, notable exceptions to this, in such scholars as BARRETT WENDELL (1855-), BLISS PERRY (1860-), GEORGE SANTAYANA (1863-), and IRVING BABBITT (1865-). The two last-named writers of this group are not New Englanders by birth, but all four are connected with Harvard.

These scholars have devoted themselves chiefly to literary and social studies, or to kindred subjects, but Professor Santayana has also published several volumes of poems.

Another Cambridge author, SAMUEL MCCORD CROTHERS (1857-), is, like Professor Babbitt, a native of the Middle West. Dr. Crothers is an acknowledged master of the essay. Essays are of so many different kinds, that the word is an indefinite one. Dr. Crothers has followed Charles Lamb in this wide field, and has excelled in what is sometimes known as the "familiar essay,"—intimate, informal papers, almost conversational in tone, in which the writer seems to take the reader into his confidence. In Dr. Crothers' essays we feel the charm of the author's personality, we are delighted by a humor which is free from malice and a wisdom which is unencumbered by any ostentatious parade of scholarship. The cheerful, kindly, and wholesome tone of these essays makes us feel that Dr. Crothers is the true successor of Oliver Wendell Holmes.

We spoke in a former chapter of certain general characteristics of the literature of New England in the years of its greatest triumphs.* Now that we have rapidly reviewed the work of the more recent New England writers, it will be well to glance at the place of this great section in our history, and to ask ourselves what are the characteristics of its literature as a whole.

New Eng-
land in
literature.

*See p. 239 *supra*.

The important part taken by New England in the material progress and intellectual life of the country is plain to every one who has studied American history. New England was early noted for her manufactures, and for her cleverness in mechanical inventions, so much so that such phrases as "Yankee quickness," "Yankee notions," "as smart as a Yankee" became familiar here and abroad. The descendants of the Pilgrim and the Puritan were capable, hard-headed, resourceful men, thrifty and practical. They had something of that grim repression, that conscientious distrust of the enjoyment of life, that lack of gaiety and charm, which distinguished so many of their English brethren, but there is no doubt of their keen business ability, or of the important influence of New England brains on the material progress of the nation. Yet the New Englanders were more than business men and inventors; they were thinkers, the true children of those early scholar-colonists, whose natures were at once lofty, unyielding, and austere. As we have seen, there is a strain of intense spirituality in these Puritan New Englanders,—woven like a thread of gold with its harsher stuff,—and this spirituality is revealed in Jonathan Edwards, in Emerson, in Hawthorne. There is also a disposition to attach the highest importance to the intellect, and to measure all things by purely intellectual standards. The founders of our public school system, the New Englanders have always set a high value on that formal or organized

instruction, which we call education; they have been noted for their schools, their colleges, their libraries, their lectures; for all the devices which are employed to force and foster intellectual growth. Even Unitarianism, the characteristic religion of New England, is a conspicuously intellectual religion.

The "New England smartness," the "New England conscience," the "New England intellect,"—these things have made the great Puritan colonies famous and have helped them to play a large part in our national growth. They are all good things, but for the creation of the most vital and enduring literature still other gifts than these are required. Literature, in its higher and more lasting forms, is not a pure product of the intellect. The poet is not merely the scholar, or the thinker, he is the man who *feels*; the man who shares through imagination, or experience, in the joys and troubles of the men and women around him, and who, sharing the common lot, can express it for us in a play or a song. The great writer, whether in prose or poetry, may be helped by schools and colleges, but he is not made by them. The great writer is born great, and his real education comes not from schools or even from books, but from all that he sees and feels, from the people that he meets, from his failures and mistakes, from his life, as boy and man. And it is on the breadth and reality of a writer's sympathy, on his love and pity, his power to see the beautiful and the

tragic, the humorous and sublime in human life, that a writer's power largely depends.

We have good reason to be proud of the great writers of New England, and it is both foolish and narrow to undervalue either them or their work. But we must be careful not to fall into the opposite error and attribute to the Cambridge authors qualities which they do not possess; let us praise New England, but let us not forget that other parts of the country have also earned our admiration and gratitude. New England has given us pure and lofty prose; it has given us our most widely popular poet, our greatest master of romance, but, as a whole, the literature of New England is remarkable for its refinement of tone, its grace, charm, and delicacy of expression, rather than for its primitive power. It suggests the conservative culture of the old world, not the crude daring, the youthful, untried vigor, of the new. As time has gone on, New England has withdrawn more and more into her little stronghold of intellectual exclusiveness; absorbed in books, comparatively weak in the big-hearted human sympathy, out of which great literature is made. She has shut herself away from the rush and volume of the nation's life. Her intellectual supremacy has decreased, as her hold on realities has weakened, and all the while outside her borders, the rough, adventurous, vulgar, good-humored, tender-hearted, American people have been pushing and fighting their way from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific, building up a new

America, so vast, that the earlier America of the eastern seaboard seems insignificant in comparison. And, as we shall see, while New England, with her face towards Europe, has for the most part followed in the old ways, this young giant of the West, and even the reawakened South, have boldly broken their way into new fields.

STUDY LIST

RECENT LITERATURE OF NEW ENGLAND

1. Aldrich. (a) POEMS.—Among Aldrich's best or most popular lyrics are "The Ballad of Babie Bell," "Before the Rain," "Identity," "An Untimely Thought," "Nameless Pain," "Art," "Heredity." (b) STORIES AND NOVELS.—Several of Aldrich's best short stories are included in his *Marjorie Daw and Other People* (1873); his novels, *Prudence Palfrey* and *The Stillwater Tragedy*, his *Story of a Bad Boy*, and his books of travel and description *From Ponkapog to Pesth* and *An Old Town by the Sea*, are fairly representative of his prose-work outside the field of the short story. (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Life, by Ferris Greenslet; articles by Bliss Perry in *Park Street Papers*, and by William Winter in *Old Friends*.

2. Sill. (a) POEMS.—"Field Notes," "Opportunity," "The Fool's Prayer," "A Morning Thought." (b) BIOGRAPHY.—A Memorial volume to Sill was privately printed in 1887; a brief biographical sketch is prefixed to the edition of Sill's *Poems*, published by Houghton, Mifflin, 1887.

3. Woodberry.—It is not necessary here to refer to Prof. Woodberry's works on literature and literary history; they are widely and favorably known. His place as a critic is assured; his poetry, while it has long been admired by

the few, should be more generally read and appreciated. (a) Among the best of his poems are, "Our First Century," "Divine Awe," "Homeward Bound," "Seaward," "My Country," "At Gibraltar." (b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—F. W. Halsey's *American Authors and Their Homes*, and J. B. Rittenhouse's *Younger American Poets*.

4. General Sources.—The materials for the study of our recent American writers, many of whom are still living, are necessarily slight and scattered. Some of these writers are mentioned in the general histories of American Literature, others are too recent to be included. For brief biographies, with lists of principal works, see the successive editions of *Who's Who in America* (Chicago); in some cases the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (eleventh edition) will be found helpful. Short accounts of many of the recent writers, including *Robert Grant*, *A. S. Hardy*, *Arlo Bates*, *E. S. Phelps*, *M. E. Wilkins*, etc., may be found in Harkins' *Little Pilgrimages Among the Men Who Have Written Famous Books* and Harkins and Johnston's *Little Pilgrimages Among the Women Who Have Written Famous Books*; for *Aldrich*, *E. E. Hale*, etc., see also Harkins' *Little Pilgrimages, etc.*, Second Series; *Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*, by F. W. Halsey; *Some American Story Tellers*, by F. T. Cooper; *Literary Boston of To-Day*, by Helen M. Winslow; *Famous American Authors*, by S. K. Bolton; *New England in Letters*, by R. R. Wilson; *Women Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*, by F. W. Halsey; *American Writers of To-Day*, by H. C. Vedder. The student should consult Poole's *Index to Periodical Literature*, or some similar work, for articles or notices in the periodicals:—*The Critic*, *The Bookman*, *The Nation*, *The Dial*, etc.

LITERATURE IN THE MIDDLE STATES

Before speaking of the rise of new writers in the West or South, beyond question the most notable feature of our recent literary history, we must consider briefly the literature of this period in the Middle States. One of the first facts to attract our attention, when we turn to this recent literature of the Middle States, is the importance of New York as a literary center, especially since the passing of the great writers of the New England school. It is not hard to understand why this should be the case. Though in itself distinctly mercantile rather than literary in tone, New York is the largest, the richest, and the most cosmopolitan of our great cities, and as such it is the natural commercial center for our literature. It supports some of our best daily and weekly papers,—notably the *Nation*, which a critic so fastidious as Matthew Arnold pronounced, “one of the best newspapers anywhere,”*—and it thus attracts many writers from other parts of the country, who, like Bryant, Bayard Taylor, or Stoddard, in an earlier time, find it desirable to combine journalism with literature. It contains many of the most important publishing houses of the country, and it is the home of a large proportion of our leading magazines. These magazines, and especially the best of the illustrated monthlies, fill an enormous place in the mental life of America. Without stopping to

* *Civilization in the United States*, in “A Word About America.”

mention many others of more recent date, *Harper's Monthly* (founded 1850), *Scribner's Magazine* (first series, 1870-1881; second series, 1889-), and *The Century Magazine*, have been the medium for much that is best in our recent literature, and have been the means of introducing many well-known recent writers to their public. Through them, for instance, Thomas Nelson Page, George W. Cable, and nearly all the latest group of Southern story-writers, gained a hearing and rapidly won their way into public favor.

It is no wonder then that young writers, eager to make a name in literature, seek New York, very much as the literary aspirants of England have gone up to London to try their fortunes. Yet New York is the great distributing center for American literature, rather than a literary city. Irving is one of the few American authors of distinction who was born in the city of New York; almost all the so-called New York writers have come to the city from elsewhere. Thus GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS (1824-1892), whose wise and kindly comments on life, books, and manners were for years one of the attractive features of *Harper's*, was a native of Rhode Island; while CHARLES DUDLEY WARNER (1829-1900), long a co-worker with Curtis upon the same magazine, was also a New Englander by birth. This list might easily be extended. WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS, for instance, came from the Middle West, F. HOPKINSON SMITH from the South, EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN from

New England, and RICHARD HARDING DAVIS from Philadelphia. From these, and many similar instances, it is clear that literature speaks through rather than directly out of New York, and that New York, more than any other center, represents the literary life of the whole country.

New York and the Middle States have had an important share in building up a new school of fiction,

Fiction. which has occupied an important place in our recent literature. The period we are considering has given us little poetry of a high order, except that produced in their old age by the poets of the former time; it has not been remarkable for the depth or eloquence of its weightier prose, or for the brilliancy and insight of its literary criticism, but in its fiction it has made a distinct and notable contribution to literature. How are we to think of this new fiction as compared to that which preceded it?

Our first great story-writers, while they dealt with American life, instinctively turned aside from those commonplace and prosaic phases of it with which they were daily brought into contact, and selected those more picturesque and romantic themes which borrowed some charm from remoteness and unfamiliarity. Take, for example, the work of the four great masters of the earlier period. Irving recreated the vanished life of Manhattan, or sought refuge in the legends of one of the most picturesque of American streams; Cooper found his romantic

coloring in the Indian, and in the dangers and freedom of border life; Hawthorne, who complained of the difficulty of writing a romance about a country where there was nothing but a "commonplace prosperity," contrived to envelop even his stories of American life with a magical moonlight atmosphere which withdrew them from the light of common day; while Poe, the master of the terrible and the grotesque, was, in his own way, as remote as Hawthorne from the bustling, money-seeking world that surrounds us. But when we recall the best known novels and short stories written in America within recent years, we see at once that by far the greater number of them differ widely from the romantic stories of the four great writers just mentioned, in subject, character, and aim. Following the lead of certain great contemporary novelists in Russia, France, and Spain, many of our later fiction-writers have aimed to reproduce, with an unrelieved and unswerving truth and minuteness, just those everyday aspects of American society which their great predecessors instinctively idealized, or ignored. A so-called "realistic" school of fiction has consequently grown up among us during the last thirty or forty years (or since about 1870), which, according to one definition, "aims at embodying in art the common landscape, common figures, and common hopes, loves, and ambitions of our common life."

The recognized leaders of this realistic movement

are WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS (1837-), and
 W. D. HENRY JAMES (1843-). For a quar-
 Howells. ter of a century Howells has been a prom-
 inent figure among our men of letters, and in many
 ways he impresses us as one of the most representative
 authors of his time. He is not college-bred, but he
 has studied the American in the West and in the
 East. Residence abroad has given him the oppor-
 tunity of seeing our country as a whole in the per-
 spective which one gets from a foreign point of view.
 Born in 1837, at Martin's Ferry, in the Ohio Valley,
 he began his career as type-setter, journalist, and poet.
 He wrote a campaign life of Lincoln in 1860, and
 was our consul at Venice from 1861-1865. Through
 an early visit to Boston he had made the acquaintance
 of Lowell and Holmes, and after his return to Amer-
 ica he lived for a time in Boston, where he was
 received into that chosen circle of poet-scholars which
 included Longfellow and Lowell. He was editor of
 the *Atlantic Monthly* from 1872 to 1881, after which
 he removed to New York, and in 1886 assumed the
 charge of the Editor's Study in *Harper's Monthly*.

Howells has by no means confined himself to novel
 writing. He is the author of many witty little plays
 or farces; he is poet and literary critic, and has given
 us essays on the Italian poets and some charming
 descriptions of Venetian life; but it is as a leader
 of the realistic movement in fiction that he now
 chiefly concerns us. *Their Wedding Journey*, the
 beginning of his work as a novelist, appeared in 1871;

but since then his manner and methods have materially changed, as his theory of the art of fiction has taken shape. In a long succession of books he has given us the results of his conscientious analysis and painstaking observation of the most obvious and unexceptional aspects of American society. Carefully shunning the depths or the heights, he has striven with an unwearied patience to bring before us the average life of the average man and woman, withholding no detail that others might avoid as trivial which might help to make his picture real. His books are full of characters which are the unmistakable outcome of our peculiar conditions. Silas Lap- ham, struggling on the perilous edge of social recog- nition; Bartley Hubbard, the slangy, up-to-date young journalist; Lydia Blood, the "Lady of the Aroostook," the New England country girl passing through the complexities of a more sophisticated so- ciety, innocent, independent, thinking no evil, and so unafraid. Such characters move against a back- ground of more than photographic reality and dis- tinctness. We are in Boston in *The Minister's Charge* or *A Woman's Reason*, keenly alive to the fountain in the Common or the confusing procession of trolley cars; we are in New York in *A Hazard of New Fortunes*, being initiated into the mysteries of the boarding-house system or watching the trains on the elevated roads. When we reflect that Howells has not only given us as a novelist wonderfully suc- cessful examples of his theories of art, but that he

has, as a critic, preached these theories from the vantage of an editor's chair, we can gain some idea of the influence which he has exercised upon our recent fiction.

HENRY JAMES, who has long been associated with Howells as a representative of the realistic school of fiction, was born in New York in 1843.

Henry
James.

He is the son of the Rev. Henry James, a well-known lecturer and writer on theology and philosophy, and he is the brother of William James, a leading American psychologist. (See p. 315.) Almost from the first, circumstances have tended to make him at home in Europe and a stranger to his native land. He received the greater part of his education abroad, and beside studying in Germany, Paris, Geneva, and Boulogne, he visited various parts of the Continent with his family. After spending some of his most impressionable years among the surroundings and associations of Europe, he returned to the United States and settled in Cambridge, where he entered the Harvard Law School in 1862. Three years later he made his first venture in authorship, *A Story of a Year*, which appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In 1869 he settled in England, and although he has visited this country from time to time, England has since then remained his home.

Yet the spell of Europe, and residence abroad, have not entirely broken the tie between James and his native land. He went to live in England, but he continued to write for the *Atlantic Monthly*, and

American characters enter largely into nearly all his stories. His long acquaintance with life abroad, and his opportunities for the study of the American in Europe, have naturally made him pre-eminent in what has been called "the international novel," novels that introduce Europeans and Americans in those relations which are the outcome of our steadily increasing intercourse with the old world.

His first novel, *Roderick Hudson* (1875), the story of the tragic failure of a young American of genius, was followed by *The American*, *The Europeans*, *Daisy Miller*, and *An International Episode*. *Daisy Miller* is a study of the audacious innocence of an American girl in Europe, and even the titles of the other books just named suggest an author at home in two continents. James' literary life has been one of untiring and conscientious industry. By a long succession of books, including novels, short stories, sketches, critical essays, and a biography of Hawthorne, he has won and maintained a high place among contemporary men of letters. All this mass of work cannot be discussed in a rapid survey; the most that can be done is to call attention in a very general way to some of its characteristic features.

Probably the first reflection of every thoughtful reader of James' novels is that these elaborate, carefully executed studies, of manners and motives, which take us into the midst of the artificial life and conventions of the older communities, seem more like a product of the old world than the new. Aldrich,

as has been said, was almost too exquisitely refined and minute in his workmanship, but James' art, fostered and mellowed on the soil of Europe, seems the expression of a nature in which the splendid hopes, the noble ardors, the fiery energy of youth, have all shrunk and shriveled into a hard, cold cleverness, into a cynical, weary disillusion. "Whatever the American men of genius are," writes a popular English critic, "they are not young gods making a young world. Does Mr. Henry James infect us with the spirit of a schoolboy?"

So far as this criticism relates to James, it is certainly true. James, more particularly in his later books, is not a young god, a Prometheus bringing down the divine gift of fire to mortals; he is rather a highly trained and faithful observer of life, especially the life of the leisure class. In reading his books, we instinctively think of the author as a cultivated man of the world; a trifle bored, perhaps a little exclusive and superior, but a curious spectator, nevertheless, of the low aims and petty follies of others; a looker-on at the modern Vanity Fair, mildly amused, gently ironical, even genuinely sympathetic, but by habit the student and critic, a little apart from the life he describes. We may think that his art is too fastidious and "subtle" for our rough half-educated democracy, or we may believe that there is a masculine force and tenderness, an epic largeness in America, which James, with all his skill and culture, is unable, or unwilling, to perceive or describe.

But whether the fault lie with the author or the reader, there can be no doubt that James neither represents nor reaches the great mass of his countrymen. Many read his earlier novels with delight, finding in them not merely great cleverness, but a charm and ease of style, a sense of the wonder, repose, and romance of historic Europe, and even, as in *Roderick Hudson*, a spiritual vision and tragic power. But during his long career as a novelist, the softer hues and early morning freshness of romance and sentiment gradually faded into the hard, uncompromising light of common day. The subjects of the stories (if these social studies in a conversational form can be called stories), have become of less general interest, in some cases less wholesome, and the style has grown more complicated and obscure. In consequence, many intelligent people have ceased to read James altogether, while others, bewildered and discouraged by the intricate and tortuous sentences, the epigrammatic conversations that seem to lead to nothing, long for more simplicity, more nature and less art. As we look at these novels as a whole, even while we remember their merits, we ask whether after all we are compensated for the expense of time and effort required to read and understand them. When we have solved the riddle, we question whether it was worth while. Great art satisfies some permanent need of the human spirit; it may amuse, rebuke, enlighten, sustain, comfort, or elevate, but whatever it gives it has something in it that helps or nourishes

man's soul. Speaking generally, the art of Henry James does not seem to us of this supreme quality; there is not enough vital nourishment in it, and it often tempts us to say, with Milton, "the hungry sheep look up and are not fed."

Beside these two veteran leaders of American realism, the one a native of, the other closely identified with New York, there are many recent novelists in the Middle States, whose work can only be alluded to here. FRANCIS MARION CRAWFORD (1854-1909), the son of Thomas Crawford, a distinguished American sculptor, was even more European in his life and work than Henry James. Both his parents, indeed, were natives of New York, but Crawford himself was born in Italy, and while he received a part of his education in the United States, nearly all his life was passed abroad. His first novel, *Mr. Isaacs* (1882), a fresh and entertaining story of Anglo-Indian life, written some time before Kipling and others had made India comparatively familiar to the reader of fiction, won Crawford immediate success. From this time until his death in 1909, Crawford wrote rapidly and well, producing in all some fifty or sixty books, all, with a few exceptions, fiction. Crawford was a man of unusual cultivation; he embodied his intimate knowledge of Italian history and art in a book on Rome, and in several historical stories, but it is as a novelist that he is chiefly known. The scene of nearly all his stories is laid in Europe, and his extraordinary knowl-

edge of foreign life and civilization, and especially of that of Italy, is always felt but never obtruded. His novels, unlike those of James, are thus rather European than international. Indeed, Crawford and James, our two cosmopolitan novelists, are contrasts at all points. Crawford is content to tell an interesting story in a clear and vivid fashion, and while his books are full of a suggestion of foreign atmosphere, he does not vex himself with psychological analysis or the philosophical criticism of life, for he held the old-fashioned belief that a novel, while it must be artistic, should "conduce" to "our peace of mind" and pleasure during our "hours of idleness." *

Besides James and Crawford (who belongs to New York City by descent), the state of New York has contributed a number of well-known novelists. Among these are HAROLD FREDERIC (1856-1898), who wrote *In the Valley*, an historical romance of early New York, and other novels of American life; PAUL LEICESTER FORD (1865-1902), whose political novel, *The Honorable Peter Stirling*, was widely discussed; HENRY HARLAND (1861-1905), whose style, as in *The Cardinal's Snuffbox*, has a distinctive delicacy and grace; EDWARD NOYES WESTCOTT (1847-1898), a banker, who at the close of his life made a memorable addition to American humor in his *David Harum*; and EDITH WHARTON (1862-), author of *The*

* *The Novel: What It Is.*

Valley of Decision (1902), *The House of Mirth* (1905), and other novels and short stories notable for their seriousness of purpose, their cultured tone, and their careful art.

Outside the limits of New York state, we find a number of notable story-writers in this middle region. Among the many Pennsylvanians, we may name REBECCA HARDING DAVIS (1831-1910), first known for her somber and powerful story, *Life in the Iron Mills* (1861), whose books, full as they are of vital force and earnest purpose, are but the partial expression of a large and noble nature; DR. S. WEIR MITCHELL (1829-), a distinguished physician, a poet, an essayist, as well as a novelist, the author of *Hugh Wynne*, *Free Quaker*, a story of the days of the Revolution, and many admirable novels of contemporary life; ELLEN OLNEY KIRK (1842-), a native of New England, and a Pennsylvanian by adoption, many of whose stories deal with the life of the leisure class in the Eastern cities; FRANK R. STOCKTON (1834-1902), the fantastic, original, and delightful author of *Rudder Grange* (1879), whose enigmatical story, *The Lady or the Tiger*, may fairly be said to have aroused the curiosity of the nation; THOMAS A. JANVIER (1849-), who, besides such admirable short stories as *The Passing of Thomas*, has written books on Mexico and on the Dutch founders of New York; RICHARD HARDING DAVIS (1864-), the brilliant war correspondent, dramatist, and story-writer, and the creator of Van Bibber, whose

narrative skill and quick eye for the striking and dramatic points in a scene or situation have won him a deservedly high place; CHARLES BELMONT DAVIS (1866-), like his brother, Richard Harding Davis, a successful writer of short stories; OWEN WISTER (1860-), who, though a Philadelphian, has so identified himself with Western life by his *Virginian* and other stories, that he may be more appropriately spoken of in connection with the work of that section; * and Mrs. Deland.

MARGARET WADE DELAND (whose maiden name was Campbell) was born, in 1857, in Allegheny, a manufacturing town, now part of the city of Pittsburgh, in western Pennsylvania. Mrs.
Deland. Allegheny is in the Ohio Valley, one of the great gateways for our westward migration, and this valley, as we shall see later, has had a large share in the making of our recent American literature. The people of this region were chiefly English, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish, the stocks which have been a dominant force in our literature and civilization. Mrs. Deland's childhood was passed in the quiet, old-world village of Manchester, then a suburb of Allegheny. Her childish impressions in a spot thus remote from the feverish hurry and false standards of our modern city life entered deeply into her nature, for Manchester, under the name of Old Chester, is the scene of many of her best stories. These peaceful surroundings were soon left behind, for the big world

*See p. 398.

outside. At sixteen the young girl who had grown up in provincial Manchester, was in New York City studying drawing at the Cooper Institute. In a few years more we find her teaching design at a New York Normal School. Six years later she published *The Old Garden and Other Verses*, and, in 1888, her first novel, *John Ward, Preacher*. Since then, by her *Old Chester Tales*, *The Awakening of Helena Richie*, and other novels and short stories, Mrs. Deland has taken a foremost place among contemporary writers of fiction. In these books we meet with many problems of conduct and of conscience; old problems, for the most part, presented to us in the modern guise in which they confront the men and women of to-day. But Mrs. Deland's stories are not mere studies of abstract questions of conscience: her characters, the lovable, wise old clergyman, Dr. Lavendar, the good-hearted Dr. King, the boy David, are as real and living as ourselves or our neighbors. As we read of the faults, the mistakes, the unkind judgments, the human sympathy, the joys and difficulties of these people whose lives are so like our own, we find that, almost imperceptibly, we are beginning to look with a deeper charity and understanding into the lives of those about us. For one great quality in all that Mrs. Deland writes is its warm charity, its big-hearted human sympathy for the everyday troubles of everyday people. Mrs. Deland does not look down on life from the height of a critical superiority; she makes our ordinary daily life seem wonderful, because by

the fullness of her love and pity, she helps us to see what life means.

The stories of HOWARD PYLE (1853-1911), the famous artist and illustrator, are full of the spirit of romance and the zest of manly adventure. Especially is this true of his *Merry Adventures of Robin Hood*, and of the three books in which he tells the legends of King Arthur and his Knights. Among the many writers who have undertaken in our day to retell one or another of the famous old-world stories to a modern audience, Howard Pyle holds a high, if not the highest, place.

Other story
writers.

With the Middle States we must also associate KATE DOUGLAS WIGGIN (1857-), (Mrs. George C. Riggs), whose wholesome humor and homely wisdom have won her a multitude of readers, and STEPHEN CRANE (1870-1900), remembered for his descriptions of the horrors of war in his *Red Badge of Courage*. While still more recently VAUGHAN KESTER (1869-1911) has produced in *The Prodigal Judge* a story of unusual power, and full of a promise which must now remain unfulfilled.

Beside such notable fiction-writers, the Middle States have to their credit many prominent scholars and writers in other fields. The works of HENRY VAN DYKE (1852-), poet, essayist, and critic, and of HAMILTON WRIGHT MABIE (1846-), who has written a life of Shakespeare, and many other books, are widely and favorably known. The editor of the *New York Nation*, PAUL

Poets and
scholars.

ELMER MORE (1864-), is among the foremost literary critics of America, while AGNES REPPLIER (1855-), in Philadelphia, has long been regarded as one of the most witty and brilliant of our later essayists. Comparatively little poetry of a high order has appeared in the Middle States in recent years. Yet such writers as LLOYD MIFFLIN (1846-), CHARLES LEONARD MOORE, HARRISON S. MORRIS, and FLORENCE EARLE COATES, have shown us that men will still pause and listen to those who have the true gift of song.

We must pass over many of the recent scholars of the middle region, as their researches lie somewhat outside the strict limits of literature, but the work of JOHN BACH MCMASTER (1852-), author of *A History of the People of the United States*; of FELIX EMANUEL SCHELLING (1858-), who has written a learned and authoritative *History of the Elizabethan Drama* (1908), and other admirable books; and of HORACE HOWARD FURNESS, JR. (1865-), who is worthily continuing his father's Variorum Edition of Shakespeare, cannot be left altogether unnoticed.

We have spoken of some of the later writers of the Middle States, whose work seems to us representative. But such a list of names and books, incomplete as it necessarily is, can only suggest to us the literary activities of this section during the last half century. Indeed, when we look at the literature of this great middle

**The Middle
States in
literature.**

region impartially, from first to last, we see that its place in our intellectual progress is far greater than is commonly admitted. We find here, it is true, no group of writers comparable to that which at Cambridge and Concord expressed the highest genius of New England. But we must remember, on the other hand, that the birthplace of our national literature was in these Middle States. Here lived Charles Brockden Brown, "the first American man of letters"; Irving, the real father of our national literature, "the first ambassador of letters whom the new world sent to the old"; Bryant, the earliest of our greater poets; Cooper, the earliest of our greater novelists; Walt Whitman, whose wild, half-barbaric chant seems to many the voice of the new world. And if, as we pass on to a later time, no one figure seems as yet to dominate the rest; it is clear that with historians like Henry C. Lea, with scholars like Horace Howard Furness, with novelists like Margaret Deland, this middle region has had from first to last an important share in the nation's higher life.

STUDY LIST

RECENT LITERATURE OF THE MIDDLE STATES

1. Curtis. (a) WORKS.—*Prue and I* (one of the best known of his early works) and *Lotus-Eating* are published in Everyman's Library; see also his *Potiphar Papers*, and *Literary and Social Essays*. (b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Life, by Edward Cary, in *American Men*

of Letters Series; W. M. Payne, in *Leading American Essayists*; William Winter, in *Old Friends*, and Parke Godwin's Commemorative address, "George William Curtis," (New York, 1893). See also Lowell's poem, "An Epistle to George William Curtis."

2. Warner. (a) WORKS.—The complete works of Warner, in 15 volumes, have been edited by T. R. Lounsbury (1904). *In the Wilderness*, a series of Adirondack sketches, is published in the Riverside Literature Series. Among many other books may be mentioned *Saunterings*, *My Summer in a Garden*, *Fashions of Literature*, and *The Relation of Literature to Life*. (b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Life, by Mrs. A. A. Fields, in *Contemporary Men of Letters Series*, and J. W. Halsey's "Warner's Home in Hartford," in *Authors of Our Day*.

3. Stedman. (a) PROSE WORKS.—*Victorian Poets, Poets of America, The Nature and Elements of Poetry*. (b) POEMS.—The following will give a general idea of the style and character of Stedman's shorter poems: "Voice of the Western Wind," "Summer Rain," "Surf," "The Singer," "The Undiscovered Country," "Toujours Amour," "Autumn Song," "Pan in Wall Street," "Abraham Lincoln," "Gettysburg," "How Old John Brown Took Harper's Ferry." (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—*Life and Letters of E. C. Stedman*, by Laura Stedman and G. M. Gould, 2 vols., 1910; see also articles by T. W. Higginson, in *Carlyle's Laugh*; "Mr. Stedman's Poems," by J. H. Bower, in the *Outlook*, vol. 59, p. 35; and "Living Critics, E. C. Stedman," by H. W. Mabie, in *The Bookman*, vol. 3, p. 421.

4. Howells. (a) NOVELS.—The following are among the best and most representative of Mr. Howells' novels: *Their Wedding Journey*, *The Lady of the Aroostook*, *The Rise of Silas Lapham*, *The Hazard of New Fortunes*, *A Modern Instance*. (b) FARCES.—*The Garrotters*, *The Sleeping Car*, *The Elevator*. (c) ESSAYS, TRAVEL, ETC.—*Imaginary Interviews*, *Venetian Life*, *Seven English Cities*. Mr. Howells is also

the author of a volume of poems. (d) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—E. F. Harkins, in *Little Pilgrimages, etc.*, and W. L. Phelps, in *Essays on Modern Novelists*. "The Latest Novels of Howells and James," article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 91, p. 77, by H. W. Preston. "William Dean Howells," article by Mark Twain, in *Harper's Magazine*, vol. 113, p. 221. "William Dean Howells as a Critic," article by Brander Matthews, in *The Forum*, vol. 32, p. 269. "William Dean Howells," article by H. T. Peck, in *The Bookman*, vol. 4, p. 529.

5. James.—The best edition of Mr. James' works is the New York Edition, published in 22 volumes, by Scribners, 1909. (a) NOVELETTES AND SHORT STORIES.—Daisy Miller, *The Passionate Pilgrim, An International Episode, Pension Beaurepas*. (b) NOVELS.—Roderick Hudson, *The American, The Portrait of a Lady*. (c) SKETCHES AND ESSAYS.—*Portraits of Places, English Hours, Partial Portraits*. (d) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—E. F. Harkins, in *Little Pilgrimages, etc.*; E. L. Cary, *Novels of Henry James*, including a bibliography of his works.

6. Crawford. (a) NOVELS.—The following stories are good examples of Crawford's manner: *Mr. Isaacs, A Roman Singer, Via Crucis* (a story of the second crusade), *Cecilia, a Story of Modern Rome, The Tale of a Lonely Parish* (a story of English life), *Saracinesca*. (b) OTHER WORKS.—*Ave Roma Immortalis, Studies from the Chronicles of Rome*, 2 vols., and *The Novel: What It Is* (a short study of the art of fiction). (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—F. W. Halsey, "Marion Crawford in Sorrento," in *Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*; E. F. Harkins, "F. Marion Crawford," in *Little Pilgrimages, etc.*; "Marion Crawford at Home," article by W. P. Trent, in *Sewanee Review*, vol. 2, p. 239; "The Italian Novels of Marion Crawford," article by Ouida, in *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 42, p. 719; "Marion Crawford at Sorrento," article by W. Bond, in *Critic*, vol. 32, p. 35; article on "Crawford," by E. P. Lewis, in *Book News*

Monthly, April, 1912; see also the chapter on Marion Crawford in his sister's book, *A Diplomat's Wife in Many Lands*, by Mrs. Hugh Fraser.

7. **Deland.** (a) **SHORT STORIES.**—Some of Mrs. Deland's best short stories are in *Old Chester Tales* and *Dr. Lavendar's People*, in which the character of Dr. Lavendar grows in beauty and endears him to all readers. (b) **NOVELS.**—*John Ward, Preacher*; *Sidney, The Awakening of Helena Richie*, *The Iron Woman*, are among the most interesting of Mrs. Deland's novels, and they deal with old problems in a new and stimulating manner. (c) **POEMS.**—*The Old Garden and Other Verses*. (d) **BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.**—F. W. Halsey, in *Women Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*; article on "The Childhood of Margaret Deland," in *The Outlook*, vol. 64, p. 407; article on "Margaret Deland at Home," in *The Critic*, vol. 33, p. 33.

8. For recent literature of the Middle States, see also Study List for "Recent Literature of New England," section 4.

LITERATURE IN THE SOUTH

We must now try to form some general idea of the place taken by the South in our recent literary history. While New England, although gradually losing her leadership, has continued to hold a dignified and important place in our intellectual and literary life; while New York, the metropolis of the Middle States, has become the greatest commercial center for our literature—the South has borne a distinctive and honorable part in the literary progress of the nation.

With the close of the Civil War, the Southern States entered upon a new and momentous era in their history. They had fought to the end for the maintenance of the old *régime* with a desperate and heroic

determination; they had given of their best, and the war had left them weakened and impoverished; face to face with difficulties great enough to tax the wisdom and ability of the strongest people. Until we appreciate the greatness of her task, we cannot fully appreciate the energy and courage with which the "new South" faced the work before her. The result was a material and intellectual progress, which was surprisingly rapid, if we consider the obstacles to be overcome. In fact, the changes which followed the war brought with them new possibilities of growth, and opened the way, painful and difficult as it was, to a broader and healthier development. Slavery, which had been the basis of the social and agricultural system of the South before the war, had become more and more a bar to progress. The abolition of slavery freed the South from a burden and a peril; it brought with it the advance of the Southern States on new lines; as time went on it bound them more closely to the rest of the country, and enabled them to share in the forward movement of a reunited nation. Twenty years after the close of the war, a leading patriot of the new South could say in New York: "The South found her jewel in the toad's head of defeat. The shackles that had held her in narrow limitations fell forever when the shackles of the negro slave were broken. The new South is enamored of her new work. Her soul is stirred with the breath of a new life." *

* Speech by Henry W. Grady before the New England Society of New York, at the dinner of December 22, 1886.

By 1871 the last of the seceding states had been readmitted to the Union, and gradually, as her hardest problems began to press less heavily, as she developed her splendid resources of wealth and adapted her life to changed conditions of progress, a new South rose out of the ashes of the old.

Almost as soon as the war was over, the signs of literary activity and of a keen interest in the higher education became evident. Magazines were founded; notably the *Nineteenth Century*, published at Baltimore, to which Sidney Lanier contributed. We find a host of writers new or old; among the latter Lanier, whose work has been already mentioned, was pre-eminent; among the former the story-writers, William Gilmore Simms and John Esten Cooke, and the poet, Paul Hamilton Hayne. In 1876 the founding of Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore marked the beginning of an era in the intellectual life of the South, and indeed of the whole country. But it was not until about ten years after peace had been established that the life of the new South began to find its fuller literary expression through a remarkable group of younger writers.

GEORGE W. CABLE (1844-), a native of New Orleans; JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS (1848-1908), a journalist in Atlanta, Georgia; THOMAS
 Fiction. NELSON PAGE (1853-), a young lawyer in Richmond; and Mary N. Murfree (1850-), of Tennessee, who wrote under the name of CHARLES EGBERT CRADDOCK, were conspicuous among the

pioneers of this new Southern literature. The movement was soon reinforced by GRACE E. KING (1852-), like Cable a native of New Orleans, and by many others. When Cable began his literary career, in the early 70's, the publishing houses and magazines of the South had little more than a local reputation and influence, and it was through the Northern publishers, and through the pages of the leading Northern magazines, that these Southern writers first gained a national recognition. Thus '*Sieur George*, the first of Cable's stories of Creole life in New Orleans, appeared in *Scribner's* in 1873; J. C. Harris's inimitable reports of the doings and sayings of *Uncle Remus*, were brought out in book form by a New York publisher in 1880; four years later Page published *Marse Chan*, his first and one of his best stories, in *Scribner's*, and Miss Murfree's first story (afterward included in a collection, *In the Tennessee Mountains*) appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* during the same year. As a rule, these writers of the new South turned to fiction, as the most natural and effective medium of expression. Occasionally we find one or another of them turning aside to write a study of social conditions, like *The Silent South* of Cable, or *The Old South* of Page; or, again, we come upon such a book as Grace King's historical and descriptive account of New Orleans; but their place in literature rests largely on their fiction, and more especially upon their short stories. Representing different sections of the South by birth and association,—Louis-

ana, or Georgia, Virginia, or Tennessee,—these writers were able to give a faithful as well as an artistic picture of various phases of Southern life in the present and in the past. It is true that Simms, Cooke, and others of an earlier generation had given their stories a similar setting, but these new writers presented the many-sided life of the South in its more out-of-the-way and less familiar aspects, or else treated it with a finer art and with a keener perception of its peculiarities or its charm. Through the pages of Cable's masterly story, *Jean-ah-Poquelin*, we enter the old French city of New Orleans shortly after it had come into the possession of the United States under the Louisiana Purchase; we see the home of the old Frenchman outside the city, the house of a past order, forlorn, battered, defiant, surrounded by mud, morass, and the dense growth of a noxious wilderness—a bar in the path of American progress, a survival, soon to be swept away. Or, by the art of Miss King, we find ourselves in later days in the city itself; on a balcony half-hidden from the moonlight by the climbing vines, we listen to the stories which the women tell in low tones through the friendly, warm-scented night. And again, we are with Miss Murfree in the wild mountain solitudes of Tennessee; with Page we move with the landed gentry of Old Virginia, and act over the scenes of the war; or with Joel Chandler Harris, or the negro poet, Irwin Russell, we draw nearer to the emotional, half-primitive mind of an alien race. The pioneers

of this new fiction of the South have had many successors. The stories of JAMES LANE ALLEN (1849-

), a native of Kentucky, are characterized by thoughtfulness and beauty, with a deep and almost primitive hold on the life of nature, while the work of AMELIE RIVES (*Princess Troubetzkoy*), RUTH MCENERY STUART, and F. HOPKINSON SMITH, the versatile and genial creator of "Colonel Carter," has long been favorably and widely known. To them, still later writers are to be added: MARY JOHNSTON (1870-), known to us all through *To Have and to Hold*, and many other books; ELLEN GLASGOW, the author of *The Deliverance*; THOMAS DIXON, whose *Leopard's Spots*, a lurid and sensational story of the reconstruction period, was widely read; JOHN FOX, JR., who wrote *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come*, and WILL N. HARBEN, known by his stories of life in Georgia. These writers, and many others that might be named, suggest to us the large amount of good fiction that has been produced in the Southern States since the close of the war. And this development of Southern fiction is not a thing of the past; new Southern writers are still pushing their way forward, and new Southern stories, as, for example, Mary Johnston's *The Long Roll* (1911), are still arresting the attention of a nation of readers. Yet as we review the work of these Southern writers as a whole, we doubt whether the early stories of Cable, Page, and other pioneers have been equaled

so far, either by those writers themselves or by their successors.

The poetry of the South since the Civil War has been less distinctive, and of less national importance than its fiction. Not only has the new

Poetry. South given us no poet who ranks with Poe; it would be difficult to find any recent Southern poet who by general consent would be given a place beside Lanier, or even perhaps beside Timrod or Hayne. But when we say that the novelists and story-writers have counted for more than the poets in the recent Southern literature, we must remember that this is not true of the South only, it is part of a condition of affairs which extends over our entire country. Poetry has never meant as much to us as it did to our ancestors across the sea, in the old days when the people had their ballads and the plowman and milkmaids lightened their labor with song. Here and there in the songs of the Western cowboys, or the melodies of the Southern negro, we may come upon some survival of those older days, but on the whole we have no folk-songs; on the contrary, nearly all of our best poetry, made by the literary class for literary readers, has been more or less removed from the life and interests of the whole people. The novelists have kept near to the people, for they have given us our thrill of adventure, our shock of tragedy, or they have told us simple stories of our familiar life in a way that we all can understand. And so the people have turned to the story-writers,

while the space between the poet and the people has widened, and the sympathy and understanding between the singer and the people has become largely a thing of the past. It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to produce a truly national poetry under these conditions, for the great poets of a nation are not mere representatives of some isolated literary coterie; they speak for the people, and—in a wonderful way—much that is best and deepest in the life of the people speaks through them. Nor is this all. It is the love of poetry in the hearts and lives of the people that finally finds its most perfect expression through the few who have the gift of saying what the many can only feel, or say, imperfectly. If you have a nation in which the best life and strength of the people is given to making money, great business men, "captains of industry," will naturally rise up among them, and these will succeed in doing what thousands are struggling to accomplish. If you have a nation whose strength is given to mechanical inventions, you will have great inventors, and so if you have a nation that loves beauty, and music, and deep thought, a nation that sings songs of its own making, you are almost certain to have great poets. There are noble traits in the American character, but we have little instinctive love of beauty, and whatever poetry there is in us has found expression in deeds rather than in songs. When the people become indifferent to their poets, and when the poets draw but little strength and inspiration from the people, the poetry of a nation is

apt to languish, or at least it tends to become a mere literary imitation, affected, insincere, and bearing no wholesome relation to the popular life. Now while we in America have not been utterly indifferent to poetry, it has occupied but a very small place in our lives, and the results of this have been only too apparent. We have had many poets, North as well as South, whose work—even though they may have written conscientiously on American themes—has been an echo or a continuation of the poetic traditions of the old world. On the other hand, we have had Walt Whitman, the self-chosen “poet of democracy,” the despiser of the traditional and conventional; but Whitman has founded no national school of poetry, nor have his chaotic utterances ever gone home to the people’s heart.

But there is among us poetry of yet another kind, poetry that is neither timidly conservative nor blatantly independent. There is growing up **Popular poetry.** among us a poetry that sings of homely things in a true and simple, but melodious way. The Southern negro, who has the primitive love of song, has inspired, or made, much of this unaffected, unpretentious verse, and so the South has naturally had much to do with the development of this kind of poetry among us. As we shall see later, the West joined the South in this movement to give the ordinary life of our people a voice in song. Curiously enough, the earliest notable composer of negro melodies, STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER, although he may

be most conveniently considered here, was not a Southerner. He was born in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1826; he was a clerk for a time in Cincinnati, and he died in New York in 1864. In the twenty-two years between the appearance of his first song, written when he was a boy of sixteen, and his death at thirty-eight, he produced one hundred and twenty-six songs, composing, like some old-world minstrel, both words and music. He was a true folksinger, a poet of the people, and the pathos and simple melody of such songs as *My Old Kentucky Home*, *The Suwanee River*, and *Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground*, have won them a place in the life and heart of the nation that more elaborate and pretentious compositions often fail to gain.

IRWIN RUSSELL (1853-1879) was among the earliest of the Southern writers to give the negro a place in literature. He was a man of genius, frail in body, intense in feeling, fond of ease and of travel, of music, of nature, and of books. He was born in Mississippi; he studied law, but disliking the drudgery it imposed, gave up his profession to drift from one place and one occupation to another. Most of his poems are written in the negro dialect, and are remarkable for their truthfulness, wit, and unobtrusive pathos. He celebrated the banjo, and reminds us that it's always found with "de nigger" and "de possum"; in another poem he brings before us that familiar incident in the Southern landscape, the negro plowing with his mule—

"Dar, dat's de way to do it,
 He's comin' right down to it;
 Jes' watch him plowin' troo' it!
 Dis nigger ain't no fool.

Some folks dey would 'a beat him;
 Now, dat would only heat him;
 I 'now jes' how to treat him—
 You mus' *reason* wid a mule."

Or, in *Christmas Night at the Quarters*, he gives us a picture of a negro dance that by its vividness and truth suggests comparison with that master-painter of rustic life and manners, Robert Burns.

Not only has the life of the negro inspired some of our most distinctively American songs, the negro himself, with his emotional Southern nature, his narrow cabin, his banjo, and his song, has written poems that bring into our over-strained, hard-worked America something of the ease and laughter, the pathos and the melody that are found in the true lands of song.

Of pure African descent, PAUL LAURENCE DUNBAR (1872-1906) holds a high place among the poets of his race. The son of a slave in Kentucky, who gained his freedom by escaping to Canada, Dunbar "grew up with such chances and mischances for mental training as everywhere befall the children of the poor." Yet his work is more varied, it comes out of a richer and deeper experience than that of Russell. His most characteristic poems deal with the most familiar subjects, and they have in their own way that deep democratic humanity which we find in the stories of Mrs. Deland. Now

we linger about *The Deserted Plantation*, with the "big house" of the master solemn and forsaken, the voice of the banjo "silent in de qua'ters."

"Whah's de da'kies, dem dat used to be a-dancin'
Ev'ry night befo' de ole cabin do'?
Whah's de chillun, dem dat used to be a-prancin'
Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de flo'?"

Now we attend a country spelling-bee, or listen to the sermon of a negro preacher before the war. But through all these poems, in dialect, or in our familiar English, there is something spontaneous, melodious, wholesome.

We have spoken of a few poets who have taken the negro for their chief theme, but if we think of these plantation melodies simply as poems written by certain writers, however excellent, we shall get a very imperfect idea of their true character and significance. It is only when we think of these negro melodies as a whole, when we realize that they are not merely printed verses in a book, but the true songs of a race that loves singing, that we understand their true relation to our literature. These songs are the songs of a people. Russell, Dunbar, Harris, have written negro melodies, but it has been the love of song in the negro that has inspired the poets, not the poets who have implanted the love of song in the hearts of the race.

The negro melodies are not the only songs of the people. The cheerfulness, humor, and comradeship in the newspaper verses of FRANK LEBBY STANTON

Stanton
have gained his poems a welcome from countless readers. Stanton writes out of the fullness of his heart, as a man speaking to men of the hopes and experiences in which all share. Perhaps his own training helped to make him a poet of the people. Born in Charleston in 1857, he had a common school education, and (like Mark Twain and other characteristically American writers), after serving his apprenticeship as a printer, he became a journalist. "He began the practice of publishing at least one original piece every morning" in the *Atlanta Constitution*, the newspaper with which he was connected. These verses were not labored literary productions; they "were struck off in the heat and hurry of newspaper work, not as things apart, but as a matter of course." Often he would write "four or five poems a day." But there was truth and human nature in these unstudied newspaper verses, and, throughout this country (which is supposed to be too practical for poetry), and even in England, they were read and admired.

Emmett
In reviewing this popular poetry, we must not forget the songs and poems, many of them born out of the enthusiasms and sufferings of our Civil War, which seem less the utterance of a single poet than the voice of the community speaking through him. Such historic songs as *John Brown's Body*, *Dixie*, composed in its original form by Dan Emmett, a once famous negro minstrel, and set, it is said, to an old plantation melody, and *Maryland, My Maryland*, of

JAMES RYDER RANDALL, are good examples of this class.

Besides these poets of the people, there are other recent poets of the South who have followed the traditions of English poetry more closely. Among these are JOHN B. TABB (1845-1909), ABRAM J. RYAN (1839-1886), LIZETTE WOODWORTH REESE (1856-), and MADISON J. CAWEIN (1865-), who has been recently pronounced "the most distinctive poet of the South." Any adequate treatment of these authors would carry us beyond our present limits.

When we attempt to understand and measure this literature of the new South, we cannot but feel that it has already brought a fresh and welcome impulse, and that we are justified in looking to it for still further and perhaps greater triumphs. The war divides these younger writers from the old South, whose glories they love to revive in art. An abrupt change has removed all that generous and splendid life of the past into the proper perspective for the literary artist. Its broad plantations, its ample manor-houses, full of comfort, ease, and repose; its gentlemen of a vanished school, simple and high-minded, irascible but kindly; living like patriarchs among their troops of slaves—all these things, seen through a softening light of memory, receding and yet familiar, give to the Southern writer a peculiarly rich and dramatic background. The negro alone, as revealed to us by Page or Harris in fiction, or by Russell or Dunbar in dialect verse; his unconscious humor, his delicious

peculiarities, his quaint superstitions and folk-lore, has given to these creations of the recent South an element before almost unknown to literature.

But these Southern story-writers have done more than give us studies of new localities: we feel instinctively a different quality in their work. If we contrast it with the productions of New England, intellectual, self-examining, self-conscious, we feel the richer coloring, the warmer blood, and quicker pulses of the South. Read the most characteristic of Hawthorne's stories, and then turn to the *Marse Chan* or *Meh Lady* of Thomas Nelson Page. It is like passing from the world of thought to the world of action, from the analysis of life to living. The fine-spun problems of mind and conscience have no place in this world, but instead we have a story of which men and women never tire, which is almost as old in all its essential elements as human life. It is a world to be alive in, a young world, where the men are full of knightly courtesies and knightly courage, and where the women are good and fair; a world of young heroes who can lead a cavalry charge up the slope, to fall under the very lips of the cannon; of simple-hearted slaves whose lives are too narrow to hold anything beyond an unquestioning and indestructible fidelity; of women who seem to belong with those heroines of Homer, Shakespeare, or Scott, whom the world supposes itself to have outgrown. Or let us put such a book as Cable's *Grandissimes* beside such a keen and

clever study of Boston as Howells' *A Woman's Reason*, and it is like the tropic warmth of the Gulf Stream after the chill of Northern waters; let us place the fair, placid, gentle Priscilla, that old-time Puritan ideal of maidenly perfection, beside one of Cable's heroines, a creature of life, impulse, and movement with a "sparkle of the Gallic blood," vivacious, sensitive, appealing, changeable—and we shall know that, whatever else this Southern literature may be, at the least it is different.

And as there is in the work of these writers a fuller throb of action and motion, there is also a warmth and glow of color in many of their descriptions of Nature which seem

Nature.

to carry with them the atmosphere of the South. The earlier work of LAFADIO HEARN, who, though not a native American, may be associated with this Southern group, has in it an extraordinary richness, an unrestrained, emotional quality which contrasts sharply with the manner of the North. *Chita*, one of his earliest stories, is alive with the glow of the Southern imagination, with the raptures of one who has absorbed Nature through every sense. Cable, too, has given the Southern landscape a place beside that of New England in our literature. It is before us in many a charming passage, distinct in outline, warm and glorious with color, and bathed in the lucid clearness of the Southern sky.

On the whole, while we must not undervalue the earlier literature of the South, it seems safe to con-

clude that the changes consequent upon the war have brought with them a new and powerful impulse to literary production. It has been truly said that over much of that earlier literature there is "the trail of the amateur, the note of the province, the odor of the wax flower"; to-day the South can boast of many professional men of letters who, relieved of the drawbacks which handicapped their predecessors, belong not to the South merely, but to our American people.

STUDY LIST

RECENT LITERATURE OF THE SOUTH

1. Cable. (a) SHORT STORIES.—Many of Cable's best short stories (among them the little masterpiece, *Jean-ah-Poquelin*) are included in his *Old Creole Days*. (b) NOVELS.—*The Grandissimes*; *Dr. Sevier*. (c) OTHER WORKS.—*The Silent South*, *The Negro Question*. (d) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—H. C. Vedder, in *American Writers of To-Day*, and E. F. Harkins, in *Little Pilgrimages*, etc. (vol. i).

2. Harris. (a) WORKS.—The greater part of Harris's animal-fables (stories as remarkable in their own fashion as those in Kipling's *Jungle Book*) are contained in *Uncle Remus, His Songs and His Sayings*; *Nights with Uncle Remus*, and *Uncle Remus and His Friends*. The first of these collections contains "The Wonderful Tar-Baby Story" (perhaps the best known and best loved of them all), "Mr. Fox Tackles Old Man Tarrypin," and many other inimitable stories. Harris has also written of Southern plantation life in *Mingo and Other Stories*, and in *Free Joe*. (b) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Harkins' *Little Pilgrimages*, etc. (vol. i).

3. Page. (a) SHORT STORIES.—“Marse Chan,” “Meh Lady; A Story of the War,” and “Old ‘Stracted,” stories which show Mr. Page’s art at its best, are all contained in the collection *In Ole Virginia*. Other volumes of Mr. Page’s short stories are *Elsket and Other Stories*, and *Bred in the Bone*. (b) OTHER WORKS.—Beside *Red Rock* and other novels, Mr. Page has written *The Old South*; *The Old Dominion*, *Her Making and Her Manners*; and a *Life of Robert E. Lee*. (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—F. W. Halsey, in *American Authors and Their Homes*; Harkins, in *Famous Authors*, article on Page as the “Interpreter of the South,” by E. Mims, in *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 100, p. 109; see also *Outlook*, vol. 87, pp. 742-3.

4. Murfree. (a) SHORT STORIES.—*In the Tennessee Mountains* contains Miss Murfree’s earliest, and some of her most characteristic, short stories. Excellent examples of her peculiar manner, and of her wonderful word-pictures of the mountain region with which we naturally associate her, will also be found in her later stories: “His Day in Court,” in *The Phantoms of the Fort Bridge and Other Stories*, deserves especial notice. (b) NOVELS.—*Down the Ravine* and *The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains*, are good examples of Miss Murfree’s longer works. (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—*Literary World*, vol. 16, p. 204; article on “The Prose of Mr. Craddock” (Miss Murfree), by Oscar Fay Adams, in *Literary World*, vol. 15, p. 330.

5. King.—Good examples of Miss King’s power as a short-story writer will be found in her *Balcony Stories*, and *Tales of a Time and Place*; *Monsieur Motte*, a longer story, while somewhat confused and unequal, has scenes and passages of unusual pathos and power. Miss King has also written an excellent historical and descriptive account of *New Orleans*; *The Place and the People*, and a book on *De Soto and His Men in the Land of Florida*.

6. Allen. (a) SHORT STORIES.—Some of his most charac-

teristic short stories and sketches are to be found in *The Blue Grass Region of Kentucky* and in *Flute and Violin*.

(b) NOVELS.—*The Kentucky Cardinal*, *The Choir Invisible*.

(c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—F. W. Halsey, in *Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*; Harkins, in *Little Pilgrimages*, etc.

7. F. Hopkinson Smith.—Mr. Smith is a man of large nature and varied interests, and his work touches life on many sides. *A White Umbrella in Mexico* is a pleasant book of travel sketches; *Colonel Carter of Cartersville*, one of his best books, takes us to the South; *Tom Grogan* and *Caleb West* reflect a very different side of the author's rich experience, and *The Fortunes of Oliver Horn*, dealing with life both in Baltimore and New York, is not only an excellent story, but is probably the most autobiographical of Mr. Smith's books.

8. Other Story-Writers.—For RUTH McENERY STUART, MARY JOHNSTON, ELLEN GLASGOW, and other Southern writers, the reader should consult the books on Southern literature, etc., referred to below in the concluding paragraph (paragraph 10), on *General Works of Reference*.

9. Poetry. (a) RUSSELL.—The collected poems of Irwin Russell have been published with an introduction by Joel Chandler Harris. Russell is also represented in Stedman's *American Anthology* and other collections. (b) DUNBAR.—For some account of Dunbar see the introductory notice of him by W. D. Howells prefixed to the *Lyrics of Lowly Life*. (This introduction was reprinted in *The Bookman*, vol. 23, p. 185.) Beside his poetry, Dunbar has published a number of books of prose, including stories and sketches. (c) STANTON.—Stanton's *Songs of the Soil* contains an admirable introduction by Joel Chandler Harris. (d) CAWEIN.—An edition of Mr. Cawein's collected *Poems* was published in five volumes by the Bobbs-Merrill Co. in 1907. A collection of Mr. Cawein's *Poems (selected by the author)*, with a Foreword by William Dean Howells, was published

by Macmillan in 1911. This collection is intended to be a representative selection, illustrative of the entire range of Mr. Cawein's poetry, outside of his dramas. (The "Foreword" in this collection will be found also in *The North American Review*, vol. 187, p. 124.) (e) TABB.—See article on "The Poetry of Father Tabb," by Frank J. Mather, Jr., in *The Nation*, vol. 189, p. 534.

10. General Works of Reference.—*The Literature of the South*, by Montrose J. Moses (New York, 1910); *Pioneers of Southern Literature*, by S. A. Link, 2 vols. (includes articles on Hayne, Ticknor, Simms, Kennedy, Poe, etc.); *A History of Southern Literature*, by Carl Holliday (traces the development of Southern literature from the beginning to 1905, and includes brief bibliographies). W. P. Trent's *Southern Writers; Selections in Prose and Verse* (1905), is a well-edited, well-selected, and convenient collection. See also paragraph 4 under *New England* for further works of reference.

LITERATURE IN THE WEST

Shortly after the close of the Civil War, or about the time that Lanier published his first book, the West began to take its place beside the older sections of the country in our national literature. This rise, in the newly-settled West, of a vigorous and characteristic literature, different in spirit, as well as in subject from anything that had preceded it, is probably the most important feature of our recent literary history. It marks the beginning of an era, not only in our literature but in our national history. It means that a new stage has been reached in our fight with the wilderness, in the long march of the white civilization from the Atlantic seaboard to

the Pacific coast. Almost from the first, the Americans had set their faces westward; fighting their way to the slopes of the Appalachian mountains; passing beyond them through valleys like those of the Ohio and Shenandoah, that form the natural gateways to the land beyond; spreading up the Missouri, but always pushing the moving frontier farther and farther west. In 1803 Jefferson bought from France the great tract west of the Mississippi known as Louisiana; in 1840 the establishment of the first steamship line between England and the United States was followed by a rapid increase in the number of emigrants from Europe, and a large proportion of these foreigners went West; in 1849 gold was discovered in California and thousands of fortune hunters swarmed to the Pacific slope; in 1869 the Union Pacific Railroad, the first transcontinental railroad, was completed, and those slender lines of steel across wild stretches of plain and prairie bound San Francisco to New York.

This conquest of the West, this building up of new communities in the capacious solitudes of a new land, is one of the most dramatic episodes in our history. Here indeed is a theme worthy of an epic poet; here in the wild life of the mountain mining-camp, or on wide, lonely stretches of the plains, so lately the home of the buffalo and the Indian, are the materials out of which a new literature is to be made. Here has been seen, almost in our own day, the primitive contest of man with his fellow-man and

with the stubborn forces of nature. The vast empty spaces of this Western world have become the home of settlers from almost every nation. A confused, restless, eager, "motley throng," made up of many races and many creeds, has swept into this wide, new land, wave after wave, and spread over it from the Mississippi to the Pacific. Here in the earlier days of settlement we find emigrants living beyond the conventional restraints, even beyond the laws of civilized society. Here we find, if anywhere, something characteristic of the spirit of America: Democracy, tested once in the older lands east of the Mississippi, is being tested again in the West. And while we see a more radical spirit, while we see something of the ignorance, as well as of the audacity of youth, we see also these throngs of adventurers building cities, planting farms, raising cattle, and out of turbulence creating order, society, and law.

This Western migration, full as it was of the spirit of adventure, and of all those strangely mixed elements of heroism, humor, and tragedy, out of which the world's great romances are made, could not at the first really tell its own story through literature. It is true that the majesty of these Western solitudes touched the imagination of Bryant, and he wrote—

"The unshorn fields, boundless and beautiful,
For which the speech of England has no name—
The Prairies."

It is true that Cooper, particularly in *The Prairie*, felt the poetry and realized the epic character of this

invasion of the wilderness more fully than any writer of his time. But Bryant and Cooper did not belong to the great army of Western pioneers; they were Eastern writers who wrote about the West. The pioneers themselves—the multitudes who toiled across the plains in their white-topped wagons, the eighty thousand fortune hunters who poured into California within a year after the discovery of gold had become known—the millions that crowded to the Northwest, these men of action, as we might expect, did not leave their work to record their own doings in story or in song. Then at last, when the westward march of the pioneers had been halted by the Pacific, from the mining-camps of California, from Indiana, Missouri, and Chicago—the West spoke, and a new epoch in our literature (more important than we can now fully recognize) was begun.

At first, when we consider that this march westward dated almost from the beginning of American history, it may seem that the West was slow in speaking. But this was not the case. "The West" is an indefinite expression, but no matter what meaning we may give it, we must remember that our Western civilization is younger than that of the East. The English civilization of the Middle West is new beside that of the colonies of the Atlantic coast, while the English civilization of the "far West" is newer still. When the nineteenth century opened, the West beyond the Mississippi was not only unsettled by Americans, it was in the

hands of other nations. Emerson was born in 1803, the year of the Louisiana Purchase; in 1836, when he published *Nature*, Chicago, now the second city in the Union, was an insignificant frontier town. Before the whole West to the Pacific had become ours, through the cession of territory in 1848 which followed the Mexican War, the reputation of the fathers of our national literature, Irving, Bryant, Cooper, Longfellow, and their contemporaries, had been long established and, in some cases, their best work had already been done. And even after this, although by treaty with England and Mexico the West had become wholly ours, we must remember that a great part of the territory thus gained was a wilderness, waiting to be explored and subdued. When we look back at our history, and recall the dangers and difficulties that the pioneers had to meet and overcome, we may conclude that the West has not been slow in making itself felt in our literature.

It is not strange that California should have been the first section in this Western country to win a foothold for itself in literature. No- **California**
where else throughout the West were all **in 1849.**
the conditions of life more suddenly or more dramatically transformed. Before the discovery of gold in 1848, San Francisco was a little village of about four hundred people; a few years later it was a city of some twenty thousand inhabitants. Men swarmed there by land and by sea; from the Southern States, from New England, from the Middle West, and from

New York. In a little while miners from Australia, youthful adventurers, professional gamblers, criminals, failures, scholarly gentlemen, and coarse desperadoes were working side by side, all jostled together by a strange chance in an ill-assorted and ready-made community. This community, with its eccentric and sharply contrasted characters, its outbreaks of violence, its lure of sudden wealth, its solemn, impassive background of forest, ravine, and mountain, had an almost theatrical picturesqueness. It was an essentially democratic community. Men cared nothing here for a man's ancestors or for his past; even his name was of slight importance, for he was usually given a new one, as boys are given nicknames at school. For many in these early days, California meant a fresh start in a new world; and a man was judged not by what he had been but by what he was and what he could do. And, finally, there was something strong and primitive in this community. It was almost entirely made up of young men who had left the restraints of the older and more artificial communities behind. Here a man had to face dangers, endure hardships, and rely on his own manhood, very much as the men did in the old days of chivalry, or in the time of Homer. Almost every man worked with his own hands, almost every man went armed, as in the ruder ages of the old world. Under such conditions, elemental human traits, hidden or suppressed in a more formal and settled society, came to the surface, and men showed

something of that simplicity, impulsiveness, and crude strength which we associate with the childhood of the world. We can see clearly that such a community offered unusual opportunities to great writers; all that was needed to give this rapidly changing life a place in literature was a man who could see it truly and then record his impressions in the spirit of the artist. Among the thousands who crowded to California were two young men, whose names were to be inseparably connected with the rise of a new literature in the West; one was Bret Harte, the other was to become familiar to a world of readers as Mark Twain. The typical Californian in those early days was the man who was not a native of California, and even in that respect these two young adventurers were representative.

FRANCIS BRET HARTE was born in Albany, New York, in 1836. His father, Henry Harte, although a man of generous impulses and scholarly tastes, was careless and improvident. The family fortunes did not prosper, and the young Bret Harte grew up in a household worried by debts and absorbed in literature. It was a curiously movable household. In 1837 Henry Harte, with his family, left Albany to try his fortunes in one town after another; always, it would seem, beginning again and never succeeding. In 1845 he died. Bret Harte was a delicate child and a devoted reader. His regular education must have been of the most elementary and desultory character, and at thirteen he was obliged to

Bret Harte.

leave school and go to work. Before he was sixteen he was supporting himself. Bret Harte's mother decided to make a home for the family in the West. In 1853 she settled in San Francisco, where Bret Harte and his sister joined her in the following year. The next two years, full of fresh impressions and varied experiences, were Bret Harte's best preparation for his life-work. He "lived on the sea-coast and in the interior"; he saw "cities, ranches, villages, and mines"; he was, by turns, "tutor, school-teacher, drug clerk, express messenger, printer, and editor." Then, in 1857, with his mind filled with all he had seen and done, Bret Harte returned to San Francisco, and before long he began to tell the world what he had seen. He worked as a printer and wrote for the newspapers. Some of his work, although it won but little notice, was new in subject and in style. In 1867 he published a volume of poems. In 1868, *The Overland Monthly*, a magazine, similar in appearance to the *Atlantic* or other great periodicals of the East, was established in San Francisco, and Bret Harte became its first editor. One of the best and most characteristic of his short stories, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*, appeared in the second number of this magazine. *The Luck of Roaring Camp* (written, it must be remembered, before Cable and Page began their work) marks the beginning of an era in the development of the short-story, as well as in the literature of the West. It is the story of a baby, born amidst the coarseness and violence of a California

mining-camp, and left utterly dependent upon the care and protection of the miners. The child's helplessness and innocence arouse the latent goodness in the "roughs" of the camp and they adopt the child and christen it "Luck." The instinct of fatherhood asserts itself in them and the cabin of these wandering gold-seekers becomes a home. The story is briefly and strongly told. The miners, the camp in the valley, the river, "the swaying pines," the vast unknown background of sky and stars—are brought before us with wonderful distinctness and in the fewest words. Humor and tragedy go hand in hand. The story makes us think and question; but Bret Harte is content to tell us the story. He suggests the moral, but he does not moralize; he raises problems, as life itself does, but he leaves us to solve these problems for ourselves.

The Luck of Roaring Camp was not Bret Harte's first effort "toward indicating a peculiarly characteristic Western American literature,"* but it was the first to attract the attention of the literary world of the East. It was followed by *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, *Miggles*, and by *Tennessee's Partner*, the wonderful story of the almost dog-like devotion of a nameless miner to his friend. The emigration of the Chinese to California was becoming a national issue, and in 1870 Bret Harte published, in the *Overland Monthly*, a dialect poem on the dark ways of the

* These are Bret Harte's own words. See Preface to Household edition of his Poems.

pensive Chinaman that was read and enjoyed from coast to coast. "*The Luck of Roaring Camp* gave Bret Harte a literary reputation, but this poem made him famous."* Indeed, unpretentious as these verses are, their publication may be thought of as an event of national importance. It is not often that the American public is really moved by a poem, but from time to time we are surprised to see that even in our prosaic America there are still possibilities for the poet.

The rest of Bret Harte's career must be told in few words. In 1871 he left California forever and came East. In 1878 he became consul, first in Germany and afterward in Scotland. After 1885 he lived chiefly in England, and there, at Camberly, Surrey, he died in 1902. Only seventeen years of Bret Harte's life were spent in California, but the impress of those years is stamped on almost all his work. He wrote many books after he left San Francisco,—the standard edition of his works fills nearly thirty volumes,—but Western life is the dominant and characteristic theme of his best prose from first to last. "Bret Harte," said Mark Twain, "got his California and his Californians by unconscious absorption, and put both of them into his books alive." Occasionally he tried his hand at other subjects, sometimes with a fair measure of success. But it was in the West that he won his fame, it is as a pioneer of Western literature that he is significant, and it is as a new

* *The Life of Bret Harte*. Merwin, p. 49.

voice speaking out of a new land that he will be remembered.

The purely literary merits of Bret Harte's stories cannot be discussed here, but one feature of his work is too important to be entirely passed over. Bret Harte did more than show us Western life and Western scenery. It was not merely the outward appearance of the West that he brought into literature; he brought something of its inner spirit also, something which, while it was not wholly confined to the West, was yet characteristically Western. Some of these differences in temperament between the West and the East have been already suggested. The West, as we all know, is not a mere extension of the East; like New England, the Middle States, or the South, it has a character, almost a personality, of its own. The difference between Chicago and Charleston, for instance, is not merely a difference in size, or wealth, or appearance; it is a difference in traditions and in character. To bring this new spirit, this separate personality, of the West into our literature is really a more important matter than merely to introduce new subjects, new incidents, or new surroundings; and it is the rise of this new spirit, free, daring, impatient of tradition, broadly democratic, and full of humanity and compassion, that we must study in the writers of the West.

This Western spirit, which is not fully represented in Bret Harte, is yet unmistakably present in much of his work. His is that comprehensive democracy

which believes that goodness and heroism are to be found in men of every class and condition, even (one might almost say especially) in places apparently the most unfavorable. He is anxious to show us, in Shakespeare's phrase, that "there is a soul of goodness in things evil"; to show us how often some rough outcast, some drunkard or gambler, has yet alive within him the heroic spirit, the tender heart of the true man. In *The Story of How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar*, while Bret Harte spares us no mean or ugly detail in his description of the camp and its inmates, he shows us how this almost repulsive spot was glorified, and he makes us feel that the ride of the swaggering Dick Bullen to buy toys for a sick child was as romantic a quest as that of any knight-errant of them all.

The early success of California in literature was due to a fortunate combination of circumstances rather than to any inherent superiority in **Literature in the Ohio Valley.** the Californians themselves. As we have just seen, life there, in the early days of the gold-fever, offered extraordinary opportunities to the literary artist, and Bret Harte, a man of genius, drifting there from the East at the fortunate moment, was able to turn those opportunities to good account. But this does not prove that California itself was intellectually in advance of other parts of the West; indeed there is good reason to think that if gold had not been discovered in the foothills of the Rockies, the story of early Western literature would

have been very different. While circumstances pushed the far West into literature comparatively early, the real birthplace of Western literature was not California, but a certain region of the Middle West. This central section, or belt of country, stretches from the western borders of Pennsylvania and West Virginia to the Mississippi Valley. In this section, which extends some six hundred miles from east to west by perhaps three hundred and fifty miles in width, we find the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, while Kentucky lies immediately south, and Missouri directly across the Mississippi on the west.

From whatever cause, an unusually large proportion of great or notable Americans have come from this particular section of the West. By giving us Lincoln, Grant, and Sherman, it has had a large share in the making of our history; by giving us Howells, John Hay, James Whitcomb Riley, Mark Twain, and many other writers, it has left its mark upon our literature. Nor can we measure the full power and national influence of this region even by these men, great as they were. It has influenced America not only through its supremely great men, like Lincoln, but also by the number of men of more than local importance which it has given to the nation. Since the Civil War it has produced at least thirty writers of national reputation, while Ohio alone has given six Presidents to the Union. During the same period the single state of Indiana has probably given more noteworthy men to literature than all

the other Western states and territories combined. Indeed the rise of a remarkable group of writers in Indiana is one of the most salient features of our recent literary history.

The national importance of this region is a fact; the reasons for that importance are, in part at least, a matter of speculation. Such a result is almost certain to have been brought about by many causes, some of them hopelessly hidden or obscure. Yet a partial explanation is suggested by certain facts in our national and literary history.

We should remember, in the first place, that this region was not merely the true birthplace of our Western literature; it was, by reason of its geographical position, the first outpost of the Western advance beyond the Alleghenies; the earliest Western settlement to become a starting point for the pioneers. The Ohio River runs in a southwesterly direction through this tract on its way to the Mississippi, and as the Ohio Valley was one of the main highways of Western exploration, the country bordering upon this valley, lying as it did in the direct path of the pioneers, became the home of these early settlers. Literature with us has been a plant of slow growth, and so it is not surprising to find that Western literature begins first in the old region of the new West.

And we should remember, in the second place, the race and character of the men by whom this region was settled. Other parts of the West, opened up to settlement at a later date, when millions of emigrants

were pouring into America from every corner of Europe, were filled up by people of almost every race and nation. But the men who established themselves along the line of the Ohio—in Ohio, Indiana, or Illinois—were of the best type of the native-born American pioneer; brave, determined, self-reliant. Like most Americans of that early time, they were almost wholly of English, or at least of British, stock. Is there any especial meaning for us in the fact that these men who planted an English civilization in the West, were mainly of English or Scotch descent? We naturally connect this fact with another; it is to this English, or British, stock that we owe nearly all that is best in our literature. Our composite population is made up of people of nearly every race and creed; millions of men from widely scattered nations have worked together in the industrial, commercial, or political life of the nation, but, with singularly few exceptions, the great builders of our national literature trace their descent to the people of the British Isles. It is significant, therefore, that Indiana, the literary center of this region, should be noted for the exceptionally small foreign element in her population. In Indiana, men of British stock (English, Scotch, and Scotch-Irish) have been the dominant element from first to last. America is not the land of one race, and it may not be long before American literature is enriched by Italian, Russian, Hungarian, or Pole; but this is, as yet, in the future. So far the English inheritance has dom-

inated our literature, as it has our language and our law. Men of English descent, Franklin, Irving, Cooper, Emerson, Longfellow, and many more, made our literature in the East; men of English descent, Lincoln, the master of a noble and concentrated eloquence, Mark Twain, John Hay, have laid the foundations of literature in the West.

On the other hand, it is equally important to remember that, with all the ties that bind them to the older states of the East, these people of the Ohio Valley have that originality and independence which are peculiarly Western. Planted in a new soil, this old English civilization is modified by the changed conditions of its life and growth. The most representative men of the new West are of a different type from those of the East. The East gave us Washington, the hero of the early days of the Republic; the West gave us Lincoln, "the first American," the hero of the later time; the East gave us Longfellow, the gentle scholar, mellowed by the culture of Europe; the West gave us Mark Twain. In studying the difference between the greatness of Washington and of Lincoln, between the genius of Longfellow and of Mark Twain, we are studying the difference between two eras in our national history.

After his own fashion, SAMUEL LANGHORNE CLEMENS (our Mark Twain) is as distinctively American as Lincoln. Longfellow was an American by birth, but Mark Twain was an American by nature; no other nation could

have produced him, and no other nation could have made him what he was. His life, with its humble beginnings, its early struggles, its queer changes, its reverses, its ultimate success, is as typical as his humor, or his West. He was born in Florida, an insignificant frontier town in Missouri, not far west of the Mississippi. He was a child of pioneers. His father, John Marshall Clemens, had crossed the Alleghenies from Virginia to try his fortunes in the West; his ancestors, on his mother's side, had pushed out into the wilderness with the great Kentucky explorer, Daniel Boone. When "Sam," as his mother called him, was four years old, the family moved to Hannibal, and this "loafing, out-at-the-elbows, down-at-the-heels, slave-holding Mississippi river town" was the real home of his boyhood. Here was the scene of many a boyish scrape or thrilling adventure, such as those described long after in *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*; here the coming of the river steamers brought a momentary excitement to the sleepy town, and stirred in each boy the "permanent ambition" to be a "steamboat man." * Longfellow and his great contemporaries in literature were college-bred; the adventurous "Sam" Clemens found the streets, the woods, the river, more amusing than the inside of a public school. He went to school at intervals, when he could not help it, until, when he was twelve, his irregular education came to an end, and he entered

* *Life on the Mississippi*. Chap. IV.

the printing office of a local paper as apprentice. He soon gave up this position for a place on his brother's paper, *The Hannibal Journal*, and, with his funny paragraphs in this paper, the young printer took his first step towards literature. But a restless desire to see the world pushed him forward. At sixteen he ran away from Hannibal in search of adventure, working as a printer in St. Louis, New York, and Philadelphia. He rejoined his brother for a time, but a few years later he was again a knight-errant of industry and on his way to New Orleans. The youthful longing to be a "steamboat man" had never left him, and in New Orleans he met a Mississippi pilot, who agreed to take him as a "sub," or assistant, so that he could "learn the river." In the years that followed he grew to know and love it, and the humorous roughness of the life on the Mississippi, as well as the beauty and romance of the great river itself, remain for us in his books. On these boats, when soundings were taken to find the depth of the water, the man who cast the lead, if the depth were two or three fathoms, would call out, "By the mark three," or "Mark twain," so that it was from the river that Mark Twain got the name under which he was to become famous. Mark Twain's early life is a series of roving adventures. After a brief experience in the Civil War on the Confederate side, he went with his brother to Nevada. Here he worked for a few weeks on a newspaper, and then drifted to San Francisco, where (as has already been

told) he met Bret Harte. All this time, while life had been teaching him, Clemens was one of the great undistinguished throng, but the years of his apprenticeship were nearly over. In 1864, his world-famous story, *The Jumping Frog*, appeared in a newspaper in New York. A few years later he joined a party of tourists in a trip to Europe, and on his return he recorded his impressions of the life and the manners of the old world in a bulky volume, *Innocents Abroad*. This extraordinary book marks the turning point in Mark Twain's fortunes. It was bought and enjoyed by all classes of people, eighty-five thousand copies being sold within the first sixteen months. Hawthorne once spoke of himself as "the obscurest man of letters in America," and we feel instinctively that the refined and delicate genius of the great romancer had in it a rare quality which alienated him from the common throng. By the publication of *Innocents Abroad*, and its successors, Mark Twain became the best known and probably the best loved man of letters in America. There was nothing exclusive about *his* genius; nothing in his books that did not reach the average man. Born and brought up among the people, ill-educated at first except in the school of experience, Mark Twain saw many things from the people's point of view. And he remained near to the people, free from that pedantry and narrowness which are often found in literary circles. "Of all the literary men I have ever known," writes Mr. Howells, "he was the most un-

literary in his make and manner." Henry James is the idol of a select and nominally superior class; he is an intellectual aristocrat. Mark Twain is, before all else, democratic. His readers are of all classes, of many nations: cultured and ignorant, Germans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen, he unites them all in one big world-wide brotherhood of laughter; he makes friends among them all, for he has a big-hearted humanity that, underlying all surface differences, makes the whole world kin.

After the success of *Innocents Abroad* had given him an assured position and established his popularity, Mark Twain came East, as Bret Harte had done, settling, in 1870, in Hartford, Connecticut. He wrote many books, short stories, and sketches, and his great host of readers steadily increased. He gave his later impressions of Europe in *A Tramp Abroad*; he wrote historical stories, *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Joan of Arc*; or he jested at the new thought in Christian Science. In his own unaccountable fashion he read widely, and his genius was deepened and matured by the broader culture of the East; but, with all this, the best of his books were those that, like *Life on the Mississippi* or *Roughing It*, came out of his early life in the West. Among these books of Western life, those twin epics of boyhood, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* and *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, are, of their kind, unsurpassed. His life, on the whole, was singularly successful. He lost one fortune, but made another;

he had other and heavier sorrows; but he had the love and honor of half the world. He began his education by playing truant from the Hannibal public school, and a few years before his death the University of Oxford, the oldest and proudest representative of English scholarship, gave him the honorary degree of Litt.D. He died in 1910, and an English paper declared that he had "added more than any writer since Dickens to the gayety of the Empire of the English language."

Through Mark Twain, the spirit of the West makes itself heard in literature; it is not the speech of our older East, schooled by Europe and distrustful of its own powers, but the Mark Twain's work. daring, self-confident spirit of a new land. America, although the tired and sophisticated people of the East have almost forgotten it, is after all a young nation, and Mark Twain had in him the irrepressible, fun-loving nature of the boy. He has not lost the primitive love of laughter, he is young like the great West from whence he came, and the spirit of eternal youth is in the pranks of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

As Mark Twain has the exuberance of youth, he has also the characteristic irreverence of young America. In *Innocents Abroad* and *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*, the art, the civilization, the aspirations of the old world are dragged before the tribunal of the new and subjected to its good-natured but shallow derision. *Innocents Abroad* is not

merely a satire on the rhapsodies, the sham enthusiasms of the American tourist in Europe; it gives us the honest judgment of a keen but crude observer on the world's masterpieces of art. In it we see the typical American Philistine poking fun at Michael Angelo, winking familiarly in the most inappropriate places, and habitually flippant in the presence of things long consecrated to reverence. And as in *Innocents Abroad*, historic Europe is brought for judgment before this representative of young America, much that was noblest in the life of the Middle Ages is travestied in *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur's Court*. Perhaps none of Mark Twain's books is more ridiculously funny than this; none shows more strongly his large, human sympathy with suffering and poverty, his indignant championship of the oppressed; and nowhere else are his characteristic limitations more evident, his painful readiness to play the jester with venerable things, whose beauty or sanctity he is unwilling or unable to understand. This confident disrespect towards many things the world holds great, this "unwearying search after the comic side of serious subjects," and after "the mean possibilities of the sublime," runs through much of our humorous literature. We Americans find materials for jesting in our enthusiasms, our aspirations, and our beliefs, while some of our most serious national problems and greatest national perils,—the corruption of politics, or dishonesty in business,—furnish stock subjects for the cheap wit of the news-

paper paragrapher. The average American is aggressively modern. He would exalt the present by patronizing or misjudging the past; he assumes that every new thing must, of necessity, be better than the old. Rather than be right with Plato he would be wrong with Bernard Shaw.

But if there is an intensely American and youthful irreverence in Mark Twain's humor, there is also a refreshing honesty. Certain antiquities are protected from real criticism by their long-established reputation, and the average person is afraid to form an independent judgment upon things which it would be considered bad taste to condemn. In judging a famous picture, or a poem, very few would dare to be honest, even with themselves. Mark Twain, a shrewd observer from a mere lad, has a contempt for sham opinions, a Western independence of conventional judgments, and while there are things which lie beyond his vision, he tells us honestly what he sees.

The more we study Mark Twain, the more clearly he stands out as the representative American man of letters, representative in his life, his character, and his works. Coming up, as he used to say, "from the very dregs of society," he speaks for the whole people. He represents our weakness as well as our strength; our blindness as well as our honesty of vision; our power to "think straight and see clear"; he represents us in his buoyant humor, his intense practicality, his scorn of baseness and cruelty, his

wide democratic humanity, his underlying seriousness. Through him we speak to the world.

Mark Twain and Bret Harte were literary knights-errant. Born, the one in Missouri, the other in New York state, they wandered from East to West, from West to East; neither continued to be a part of the life and growth of his native place. Both of these men were instrumental in building up a literature in California, but neither remained in San Francisco to identify himself permanently with its literary life. A very different position is held by a group of authors that rose to prominence in Indiana within a few years after Mark Twain and Bret Harte began their work. As a rule, these authors stand in a different relation to their native state than that which Bret Harte held toward New York; Indiana to them is not merely a birthplace or a scene of childish recollections; it remains their home. Florida, or Hannibal, are not great literary centers because Mark Twain was born in the one and lived for a few years in the other, nor does the fact that Mark Twain happened to be born in Missouri prove by itself that Missouri was a literary state. But Indiana holds a foremost place in the literature of the West; first, because, as has been already said, it has produced so many writers of distinction, and second, because so many of these writers have remained intimately connected with its life. As we glance over the broad stretches of Western country, we find some states represented in our

Indiana in
Western
literature.

national literature by one, two, or three authors; we find others that seem as yet without a voice. The few writers in this immense region, now comparatively populous, seem detached and scattered: JACK LONDON is a Californian, EDWIN MARKHAM was born in Oregon, HAMLIN GARLAND in Wisconsin. But Indiana, in the heart of the Ohio Valley region, is a literary center; she is not merely the birthplace of certain distinguished writers, she can fairly be thought of as a literary state.

These writers of the "Indiana School," as they are often called, have excelled in the two widely different fields of realism and romance.

Fiction.

They have shown a democratic sympathy with the humbler and everyday aspects of life; and they have shown a tendency to escape from the practical present into the romance of the past. EDWARD EGGLESTON (1837-1902), one of the earliest of these authors, became widely known by his *Hoosier Schoolmaster* (1871), *Roxy*, and other stories of country and village life in Indiana. It must be remembered that these careful local studies were written before the dialect story had become popular, before Miss Wilkins had painted her New England villages, or Cable or Page had begun their interpretations of the South. In the stories of GEN. LEWIS (or LEW) WALLACE, a soldier of the Mexican War, we leave the commonplace and enter upon remote and far-off times. This love of the foreign and unfamiliar is apparent in *The Fair God* (1873), a romance of Mex-

ico in the days of Montezuma and Cortez, but Wallace's large imagination and fine descriptive powers find their fullest scope in *Ben Hur* (1880). This story takes us to the Holy Land during the lifetime of Christ. It is full of the atmosphere of the Orient, and of the last days of classic Rome. Largely and nobly poetic, if sometimes crude in style, it has none of the more obvious reasons for popularity. It does not, like *Innocents Abroad*, appeal to the humor of the multitude, nor does it, like *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, arouse the mass of readers by its championship of a national issue. Yet this work of poetic and high imagination has been one of the most popular of all American books. When we learn that one million two hundred thousand copies of the copyright edition of *Ben Hur* were sold within twenty years after its publication, we are inclined to suspect that there is more spirituality and romance hidden away in the depths of our seemingly prosaic America than one who looks only at the surface might suppose. On the other hand, EDGAR WATSON HOWE (1854-), in his *Story of a Country Town*, dealt, as Eggleston had done, with the ordinary life of the rural West. NEWTON BOOTH TARKINGTON (1869-), one of the best story-writers of the Indiana school, has been successful both in the field of historical romance and in his spirited and faithful presentation of the life and scenery in his native state. *Monsieur Beaucaire* (1900) is the story of a French Prince, who, having refused to accede to the King's wishes, takes refuge

in England, where he lives in disguise as a barber. This little romance shows the touch of the master. The story passes quickly to its dramatic ending; the characters move before us clear and distinct; the dialogue is rapid and brilliant; from first to last there is the precision and restraint of the finished artist; every stroke is in the right place; nor is there one stroke too much. In this little novel, Mr. Tarkington uses his pen very much as Beaucaire himself used the rapier; all is graceful, delicate, easy, but under all the lightness there is the steady purpose, the quiet eye, and the strong hand. *The Gentleman from Indiana* relates the history of a young newspaper editor who (like Mr. Tarkington himself) came back to Indiana from an Eastern college to make his way in his native state. It is a wholesome story, less artistic, perhaps, than *Monsieur Beaucaire*, but full of a genuine appreciation of the kindness and loyalty of the plain people of farm and village, whose homely virtues the Indiana poet, Riley, has celebrated in verse. There are many other successful story-writers in the Indiana school: MEREDITH NICHOLSON (1866-), the author of *The House of a Thousand Candles*; CHARLES MAJOR, who won the public with *When Knighthood was in Flower*; and GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON (1866-), whose *Graustark* had a similar and equally sudden success; DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS (1867-1911), who has uncovered in *The Second Generation* some of the dangers and complexities that threaten our sound national life. We

need not ask here whether these books are likely to have any established place in our literature. At present it is more important for us to notice that there are a great many story-writers in Indiana; that many of their books are stories of romance and adventure; and finally that, whatever the literary quality of some of their books may be, these story-writers of Indiana know how to write books that the people will read and enjoy.

Indiana has not only supplied us with some of the best and most popular fiction produced in this country since the Civil War, she has given

Poetry.

us also a large share of the noblest and soundest poetry written in America in recent years. One of these Indiana poets, CINCINNATUS HEINE MILLER (1841-1913), stands in somewhat the same relation to the early poetry of the far West as that which Bret Harte holds towards its prose. The life of Miller, like that of Bret Harte, was full of danger and activity. He was born in the Wabash district of Indiana, and was taken to Oregon by his parents at the age of thirteen. He was a gold miner in California, and then, after studying law, became an express agent in the gold-mining districts of Idaho. After this he returned to Oregon, where he was successively a newspaper editor, a lawyer, and a judge. In 1870 he went abroad, and in 1871 published his first book, *Songs of the Sierras*, in London. Since then he has visited the Klondike, and has written several successful plays, besides various books

of prose and verse. He wrote under the pen-name of JOAQUIN MILLER, using the first name of Joaquin Murietta, a Mexican brigand, whose cause he had championed. Such a career, full of change and freedom, stands out in singular contrast to the placid and well-ordered existence of many a scholarly poet of the East. Joaquin Miller had the true poet's love of nature and of beauty. He could write truly: "I have been true to my West." He does not show us, indeed, the rough humors and sordid struggles of the Western life he knew; he shows us the West through a vague haze of mystery and romance, and tells wild tales of Mexican chieftains or of the Spanish civilization of the Pacific slope. In manner he is not original; now we come upon some reminder of the early romantic poems of Byron, now we hear an echo of the melody of Swinburne, or find occasionally some reminiscence of Poe. And yet Miller, diffuse and crude though his poems may be, makes us feel the mystery and romance of the West; he makes the life of the toiler in the cities seem petty and purposeless beside the life of the man of the plains, whose house is the broad earth and whose roof is the sky.

"By the South-Sunland of the Cherokee,
By the scalp-lock-lodge of the tall Pawnee,
And up the La Platta, what a dearth
Of the homes of men! what a wild delight
Of space! of room! what a sense of seas,
Where the seas are not! what a salt-like breeze!
What dust and taste of quick alkali!
. . . Then hills! green, brown, then black like night,
All fierce and defiant against the sky!"*

* *Songs of the Sunlands*: "From Sea to Sea."

Something of the largeness of the West is in Joaquin Miller, something of the Western revolt against what seems to him the bondage of tradition;—and with this a strange, un-American desire for rest.

“And I have said, and I say it ever,
As the years go on, and the world goes over,
’Twere better to be content and clever
In tending of cattle and tossing of clover,
In the grazing of cattle and the growing of grain,
Than a strong man striving for fame or gain.” *

The year 1871 was an eventful one in the early history of our Western literature. It was the year of Bret Harte’s first notable success, *The Luck of Roaring Camp*; of Joaquin Miller’s first book, *Songs of the Sierras*; of Eggleston’s first important book, *The Hoosier Schoolmaster*, and it was the year in which John Hay published his *Pike County Ballads*, a little volume of miscellaneous verse. JOHN HAY, who was born at Salem, Indiana, in 1838, is known to all Americans as the private secretary and biographer of Lincoln, as a scholar, a diplomat, and a distinguished statesman. He held many important posts under the government, and was finally made Secretary of State. He died in 1905. The demands of Hay’s brilliant and busy life left him scant leisure for literature. He wrote but little poetry, and even that little is of uneven merit. Yet by his dialect poems, *Little Breeches*, *Jim Bludso*, and a few others, Hay stands with Bret Harte as one of those who broke

* *Songs of the Sierras*: “The Arizonian.”

down the old boundaries and led poetry into new fields. To some extent Lowell, next to Whitman the most radical of the Eastern poets, had already done this in *The Biglow Papers*. But the most typical dialect poems of Hay and Bret Harte were of a somewhat different character. We find in many of these poems the same motive which we have noted in Bret Harte's stories; the presence of an unsuspected heroism, or tenderness in the vicious, or the vulgar. With a kindred heroism to that which animated some of the outcasts of Poker Flat, Hay's Jim Bludso, the daring, ignorant captain of the steamer "Prairie Belle," gives his life for those who are under his care.

"A keerless man in his talk was Jim,
And an awkward hand in a row,
But he never flunked and he never lied,—
I reckon he never knowed how."

And so while Joaquin Miller loved to bedeck the West in the trappings of romance, and show us the Mexican and the Spaniard with broad sombrero and jingling spurs, Bret Harte and Hay found their heroes on the deck of a river steamboat, at the bar of a Western tavern, or handling pick and shovel in the mine.

Such acts of heroism as that of Jim Bludso are not mere poet's fancies. Thousands of men in the great army of American workmen, on the freight car, on the farm, or in the mine, face danger daily with the courage of a soldier. Many a newspaper paragraph records the heroism of some locomotive en-

gineer who died at his post of duty, or some obscure fireman, who, trying to save others, was crushed by a falling wall or went to his death in the flames.

It is the poet's office to increase our sense of the wonder and beauty, the joy and the tragedy of human life; but if the poet's inspiration is drawn too exclusively from books, his own perception of the inner meaning and beauty of the changing life around him becomes dull and incomplete. Such a poet, preoccupied with the past, is apt to find the life of our modern industrial democracy dingy and sordid, when he contrasts it with the far-off ages of Greek legend or of Medieval romance. It is a part of the poet's mission to make us feel the meaning and beauty of the past; but it is also his mission to show us the glory of the present. He should be the prophet of his own generation; he should increase in us a sense of the worth and dignity of the things which lie near to us; and he should make us quick to see that, while the outward aspects of life have changed, beauty is being continually revealed in new forms, and the heroic continually declaring itself in new ways. There are signs that our poetry is coming close to the mass of the people, as one poet after another sings of new things in a new way. The negro melodies, the popular verse of Russell, Dunbar, and Stanton, the dialect poems of Bret Harte and Hay, all these point to a rise of a poetry among us which shall be the true voice of our democracy.

No poet has had a larger share in the growth of

this poetry of the people than JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY. Nature and early association combined to fit Riley for his work. He Riley. was born at Greenfield, a small country town in the farming district of Indiana, in 1853; he was educated at the public schools; he had a deep and sensitive nature, and from his childhood he knew and loved the wholesome country people and the simple pleasures of country life. When he was about twenty he began to publish verses in the local newspapers, and for many years "the more deliberate periodicals would have none of him." "He began to write," says Meredith Nicholson, "because he felt the impulse, and not because he breathed a literary atmosphere or looked forward to a literary career." * His first book, *The Old Swimmin' Hole and 'Leven More Poems*, appeared in 1883. Since then he has published many other books, full of a wholesome and kindly humor, full of the love of children and memories of childhood, of hopefulness, and of a delight in the open air and in the sun. The very titles of some of these books, *Green Fields and Running Brooks*, *Neighborly Poems*, *Poems Here at Home*, and *The Book of Joyous Children*, take us into the country and suggest cheerfulness, friendliness, and rest.

As the speaker, in many of these poems, is supposed to be some plain Indiana farmer, Riley uses the familiar speech of the country people, just as

* *The Hoosiers*, p. 158.

Lowell, in *The Biglow Papers*, adopted that of the New Englander. The people of Indiana were early called "Hoosiers," and so Riley, who spoke for them after their own fashion, has come to be known as "the Hoosier poet."

Riley, like Stanton, is distinctively the poet of the daily life of ordinary people. There is nothing sensational, nothing exceptional in his characters or in his themes. Bret Harte and Hay wrote about the ordinary man in their dialect poems, but they commonly placed him in an extraordinary, or a critical situation. But Riley's poems deal with the simplest and deepest things of human experience—with the hopes, disappointments, and affections, the doubts and consolations that, in one form or another, are likely to come to us all. In such poetry there are no heroic actions or stirring adventures to attract us; the poet's success must depend largely upon the breadth and sincerity of his human sympathy, and upon his power to see below the surface of human life. Nothing stirring happens in Burns' poem, *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; a single unusual incident would have spoiled the whole design. In such a spirit has Riley tried to show the poetry of the things near at home.

"The Poems here at home!—Who'll write 'em down,
Jes' as they air—in Country and in Town?—
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and lanes,
Er these 'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—

Who'll sort 'em out and set em down, says I,
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try

To do 'em jestice 'thout a-foolin' some,
 And headin' facts off when they want to come?—
 Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and brain
 To recko'nize 'at nothin's made in vain—
 'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds
 And brutes first choice, and us-folks afterwards?"

Riley is a poet of the people in every sense. He not only writes about them, he not only speaks for them, but he has been honored and accepted by them. There is something sound, and sweet, and truthful in his verses, something which, coming from the heart, has gone to the heart of the plain people, and which has made the author of these simple poems one of the most beloved of living American poets.

In Riley, Indiana gave us the poet of the fireside and the fields; in Moody, she gave us a poet of wider vision and fuller music, a poet of a more **Moody.** strong, ardent, and aspiring spirit, a singer not of the valley but of the heights. WILLIAM VAUGHN MOODY was born in the little town of Spencer, Indiana, in 1869. After graduating at Harvard in 1893, he taught English literature, first at Harvard and afterwards at the University of Chicago. He published two lyrical dramas, *The Masque of Judgment* and *The Fire Bringer*, beside a small volume of collected verse, entitled *Gloucester Moors and Other Poems*. He wrote two moderately successful plays, *The Great Divide* and *The Faith Healer*; he was joint author of an excellent manual of *English Literature*; and the editor of sundry English classics. He died in 1911. We learn little of the man from

this brief summary; nor can a few words of criticism make us feel the daring imagination, the beauty and dignity of Moody's poems. They follow the noblest traditions of English poetry, recalling now Milton, now Shelley, now Browning. Yet they are not imitations; they have rather a high quality of their own which is akin to the time-honored glories of English verse. For originality with this Western poet does not come from a mere wilful determination to be different from other poets; it is not an assumption of originality, it is in the man. And so, while he loves and follows the great traditions of poetry, he thinks his own thoughts, and speaks with a native power which sets him apart from the gentler and more timid poets of the Atlantic States. In *The Masque of Judgment* he faces the problem of existence with boldness. He is the poet of an intense if vague aspiration, longing for the something not revealed with the deep desire of a Shelley or a Marlowe. Listening to the passion of unrest in a bird's song, he writes:

"God who gives the bird its anguish, maketh nothing manifest,
But upon our lifted foreheads pours the boon of endless quest."

He longs to be the poet—

"Of high unquenchable desire
In the day of little things."

He has an immense pity not only for the individual but for the whole struggling race of man. He has a deep and true patriotism. And his patriotism, as

in the *Ode in the Time of Hesitation*, is not local but national; not the love of New England, or of the South, or of the West, but the love of the whole land. In this poem, as he describes the passing of Spring over the breadth of a continent, one seems to look over our country, seeing it as one great whole. We see the hint of Spring in the Boston Common, in Virginia, or in the Carolinas; Spring coming to Tennessee, to Chicago, passing over the Dakota wheat fields and "Arizonian mesas"; then our imagination is led on to the Rockies, to Alaska, to

"far Hawaii crowned with palm,
Where East and West are met."

We do not know what place Moody will finally hold among the poets of America; but we know that at least he did not shrink from great undertakings. At least he was not the timid mariner who hugs the shore; he steered boldly for the open ocean. We may differ about his poetry, but we must agree that there was a youthful strength and daring about him, a freshness and vigor which are characteristic of the literature of the young West.

We have seen the far West make its first definite impression upon our national literature in the stories of Bret Harte; we have watched the appearance of an influential group of writers in the Ohio Valley region of the Middle West; and we have noted particularly the important place held by Indiana in the rise of our Western literature. Our chief object has been to gain some idea

Other
Western
writers.

of the general character of this Western literature, and to grasp the chief factors in its development. Enough has been said, by way of illustration, so that it is not necessary to consider in detail the many other writers in various places throughout the West who have taken up and carried forward its literature. Looking broadly at this later literature, we notice that since the days of Bret Harte the West has become a favorite field for many novelists. Such writers as EDGAR WATSON HOWE, JOSEPH KIRKLAND, MARY HALLOCK FOOTE, OCTAVE THANET (Miss French), HAMLIN GARLAND, and CAPTAIN CHARLES KING, have familiarized us with many of its varied aspects. Mary Hallock Foote, in such books as her *Led Horse Claim*, depicts the life of the mining-camp; while Captain Charles King admits us into the little world of the Western army post. Kirkland, a native of New York State, who passed the greater part of his life in Chicago, has not shrunk from depicting in *Zury* the dead level of existence in the agricultural solitudes of the Middle West, in all its isolation, sordidness, and privations, with a pitiless realism and an unquestionable power. OWEN WISTER,* a Philadelphian and a Harvard graduate, although bound by education and inheritance to the culture of the East, has found the materials for his best-known stories in yet another side of Western life. These stories, *The Virginian*, *Members of the Family*, and others, take us not to the mining-camp, nor to the

* See p. 835.

great wheat farms, but to the cattle ranches, to the cowboys and Indians of Wyoming. Wister is essentially a short-story writer rather than a novelist; he excels as the narrator of some ludicrous anecdote or dramatic incident; even his famous book, *The Virginian*, is a succession of memorable episodes illustrative of life in the cattle country in the early 80's rather than a novel. But the slight and rather conventional plot that holds these scenes together is sufficient for the author's purpose; the style is vigorous, the humor irresistible, and the Virginian himself has a mingled strength and simplicity of nature which make him a distinct addition to American fiction. Wister is not merely a chronicler of the life and humor of the West. *Lady Baltimore* is a careful study of Charleston, the peaceful home of aristocratic tradition, while *Philosophy Four* introduces us to the undergraduate life at Harvard.

Although closely bound to the East, Wister's books have given him a large place in the literature of the West. WINSTON CHURCHILL, on the other hand, Western by birth, holds a somewhat similar relation to the literature of the East. Churchill was born in St. Louis in 1871. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, and he has made his home in the East. Churchill's main purpose has not been to show the local peculiarities of Western life, but to illustrate, in a series of novels, certain great epochs in the history of the nation. *Richard Carvel* (1899) is a novel of Colonial and Revolutionary times; *The*

Crossing (1904) is a story of the Western migration; *The Crisis* (1901) takes us to the days of the Civil War; while *Coniston* and *Mr. Crewe's Career* carry us on into the social and political conditions of our own time. Churchill writes in the spirit of the historian, and he has carried out his comprehensive design with both care and skill.

While these writers, from Bret Harte to Wister, have been recording Western life in fiction, that life has been continually changing before our eyes. "Steam and electricity," as Mr. Wister says, "make short work of epochs." A few decades ago the West meant the pioneer, the struggle with the Indian, the toil of the miner, the cattle rancher, and the farmer. To-day the novelist who would picture every aspect of Western life cannot ignore the thronging millions in the great cities; the fierce competition in business; the fight between labor and capital; the ambition and greed, the restless and insatiable energy that have made and are making this wonderful West. The novelists have not neglected these more recent aspects of Western life. H. B. FULLER takes us into the rush of the greatest of Western cities in his two novels of Chicago, *The Cliff Dwellers* (1893) and *With the Procession* (1895). ROBERT HERRICK, in another story of Chicago, *The Common Lot*, shows us a young architect dragged down by the insidious temptations that beset the modern business man in a big city. *Calumet K*, by SAMUEL MERWIN and HENRY KITCHELL WEBSTER, is a masterly story of Western

energy and business enterprise. It is alive with the vital spirit of modern America; its hero, a young engineer, is the hero of our modern world; the powers of evil he contends with, the power of organized capital on the one side, and of organized labor on the other, are the modern monsters arrayed against this champion of our modern world.

The two great novels of FRANK NORRIS (1870-1902), *The Octopus* and *The Pit*, show other phases of this cruel conflict in the vitals of our social system. These books are part of a large design, which Norris did not live to complete. He proposed to tell in a series of three novels "the story of a crop of wheat from the time of its sowing as seed in California to the time of its consumption as bread in a village of western Europe." What is the meaning of this story, this "epic of the wheat," as Norris called it; an epic without a hero, in which men and women play only minor parts? At first we seem to see in this "epic" only a depressing picture of man's selfishness and injustice. The wheat growers in California are tricked, maddened, and ruined by the power of the railroad, which like a huge *Octopus* pushes out its tentacles on every side until it holds them in its grip. Or we see the unscrupulous speculator in the wheat pit of Chicago scheming to buy in and hold the wheat—the daily food of man—for his own profit. Everywhere are men, or combinations of men, pushing, and plotting, fighting desperately and cruelly to take by force or fraud, not

merely their own share of the world's bread, but their brother's share also. As we study this "epic of the wheat" we begin to see in it something more than a mere study of human failure and injustice. These men, with all their frenzy of wrong and oppression, are, after all, trifling and transitory beside the great forces which sustain and nourish the world. Men try to misuse the gift, but the forces of life are stronger than the forces of death and evil, and "the wheat remains," the bounty of the great earth-mother is not withheld or withdrawn, and in the end earth's hungry are fed. Man does not make the wheat grow; there is a power pushing all things upward; the green wheat springs out of the bare earth; growth comes out of corruption, good comes out of evil, life unconquerable and eternal triumphs over death.

The Octopus and *The Pit* deal with actual conditions; they are careful and minute studies of certain aspects of modern Western life. In his essays, Norris takes a very high and serious view of his vocation. He despised the novelist who wrote merely for money or popularity; the true novelist, he believed, must be true to life as he sees it, at whatever cost, and in his own novels Norris practised what he preached. He is sincere; he is in earnest; and, while his presentation of life is carefully minute and exact, he has an epic breadth and loftiness that remind us of the lyrical dramas of Moody. He preaches hope, and he has a largeness and power that make him a great and representative figure in the new literature of the

West. From another aspect, Norris, like many of his contemporaries, is distinctively American in his themes, for while his novels are Western in their character and their locality, their scope is not local, but national. The problems that arise out of our industrial life, our politics, our haste to be rich, our great fortunes, are not the problems of a city or of a section only, and the novelist who deals with these issues in a vital way is touching the centers of American life.

The place taken by Chicago in our literary and intellectual progress is an important one. The *Dial*, one of the leading critical journals of the United States, was founded in Chicago in Chicago. 1880; the University of Chicago, one of the richest and most progressive of our higher institutions of learning, was opened in 1892. Chicago was the birth-place of Norris, while Moody, Robert Herrick, the English scholar JOHN M. MANLEY, and many other writers have been, or are still in the service of its great university. Chicago, too, gave us EUGENE FIELD (1850-1895), who is perhaps second only to Riley as a writer of popular verse, and Chicago gave us FINLEY PETER DUNNE (1867-), our beloved "Mr. Dooley," the wisest as well as the most diverting of our humorous prophets since Mark Twain. In discussing the topics of the hour with his friend "Hinnissy," Mr. Dooley has taught as well as amused a nation, for under all his whimsical extravagances there is in Mr. Dooley's humor a true insight and

a solid basis of common sense. This underlying seriousness of purpose is characteristic of much of the best American humor. Our typical humorists, like Mr. Dooley, have not been mere jesters, and it is quite probable that they have influenced and directed popular opinion more than our scholars or our poets. Humor, in fact, is a characteristic element in our literature, because it extends far beyond purely literary limits and is a characteristic element in the American people. Neither our poetry nor our scholarship rests on such a broad basis of popular appreciation. Our sense of the ludicrous is not the possession of a limited class; it is a national trait. It declares itself in the funny columns of countless newspapers, in our popular songs, our minstrels, our theaters, our slang; it is stamped on thousands of funny stories that, handed on from one to another, traverse the whole country with wonderful swiftness. No wonder, then, that when some of this popular sense of humor gets into literature we recognize in it the marks of a national trait.

We began our study by remarking that in its origin our literature was a literature of sections; we declared that its history was, before all, the story of the drawing together of this group of isolated literatures into a comparative unity, out of which a more truly national literature might come. After completing our survey of literary progress during the latest period, we realize that the local differences impressed so deeply upon the great sections of

Conclusion.

the country from the first, are even now not entirely effaced. It is not easy to say whether this sectionalism has, on the whole, helped or retarded our literary progress. We have, of course, no great literary center, no city holding the same relation to our civilization that London bears to England, or Paris to France. Our scholars, thinkers, and writers are comparatively isolated, separated by vast distances, a little group here, another there. As literature and the arts have usually flourished in the great centers of civilization,—Athens, Rome, Florence, or London,—many have felt that the intellectual life of America has suffered from this lack of a literary metropolis. However this may be, it is probable that there are advantages in the wide distribution of our literary activities, that may at least partly compensate for its lack of concentration. Each section, as we have seen, has had its part in building up our literature, and each has contributed something peculiarly its own. Our national literature began in the Middle States; it reached a higher level in New England; and, in more recent times, it has attained a fuller, and perhaps a more distinctively original, expression in the South and in the West. If we would understand the history of our literature, we must, above all, try to view it impartially, ridding ourselves of any local pride or prejudice, appreciating to the full the contribution of each section, and giving to each neither more nor less than its due.

Nor should we overlook the fact that those forces

which have worked to weld us more closely together into one compact and homogeneous people have also worked to compact and unify our literature. A national literature is the expression of a distinctively national character and ideals. We are becoming a nation in a deeper sense than we were in the days of Washington, and out of much confusion a national character, a national ideal is slowly taking form. The power of the central government has increased, the great sections of the country are constantly drawing closer together. One terrible menace to union has been met and overcome; modern methods of transportation and communication have helped and are still helping to bind together our widely scattered population, and the spread of a practically uniform system of popular education is continually bringing Americans into a closer union and establishing between them the bond of a common ideal. It is reasonable to suppose that in the future our literature, while not losing its local distinctions, will at the same time express more fully those traits and ideals which belong to the whole people. Many are inclined to be doubtful or discouraged about our future; they lament the decline of poetry among us; they feel that we have no great prose-writers, no prophets to direct the will and lift up the thought of the nation. Such a feeling is natural, but we must remember that men are too often inclined to magnify the great writers of the past and neglect or undervalue those of their own time. Instead of discouraging us,

our study of recent literature should strengthen our hope for the future. We have no Emerson and no Hawthorne, but the period which has produced Margaret Deland, Bret Harte, Mark Twain, James Whitcomb Riley, William Vaughn Moody, and Frank Norris has not been altogether barren in great names. New England has not fully maintained her pre-eminence, but if she has halted for a time, other parts of the country, the South and the West, have gone forward. And, more than all, in these recent years our literature has become more truly the voice of the people; it has grown less imitative; it is being built on a more sure foundation, basing itself broadly and firmly, not on foreign scholarship alone, but on the popular life. The intellectual and spiritual life of the race is, and always has been, a continuous development. From the far East to Greece, from Greece to Rome, from Rome and Palestine to modern Europe, from Europe to America, this higher life has moved westward. It is childish folly to neglect or to slight this great inheritance of the past; it is true wisdom to accept it thankfully and with reverence. We are to accept it, but we must not be slavishly bound by it if we are to contribute anything of lasting value to this spiritual life of the race. The scholar, however steeped in the past, is not necessarily a great writer; the great teacher of America may be a Harvard professor, like Lowell, or he may be a man who was once a truant schoolboy in a frontier town of Missouri. "To-day," Emerson writes, "is a new

day," and the American writer, knowing and loving the past, must love and interpret the life of the present, and hold high the ideals of his own people and his own time.

The ideal of America—the ideal of a "well-regulated liberty," the ideal of brotherhood, by which every man is our neighbor—is a noble one. The future of American literature must depend largely upon the faithfulness of the American people to their national ideals. If we believe that a noble future lies before our democracy we will believe that it lies before our literature likewise. There is no lack of inherent ability in us; we can do what we will. If as a nation we can be saved from the dangers of great possessions, if we can resist the thousand insidious influences which are corrupting our national character and give that which is best in us free play, American literature, like that of Greece, Rome, and England, will take its place among the most precious and imperishable possessions of our race.

STUDY LIST

LITERATURE OF THE WEST

1. Bret Harte. (a) SHORT STORIES.—*The Luck of Roaring Camp*, *The Outcasts of Poker Flat*, *Miss Tennessee's Partner*, *How Santa Claus Came to Simpson's Bar*. Bret Harte was most successful in his parodies on Bulwer, Cooper, Dickens, and other distinguished novelists. These parodies may be found in his *Condensed Novels*. (b)

LONGER STORIES.—*Thankful Blossom* (a story of the American Revolution); *The Twins of Table Mountain*. (c) POEMS.—“Jim,” “In the Tunnel,” “Plain Language from Truthful James” (commonly known as “The Heathen Chinees”); “The Society upon the Stanislaus,” “The Wil-lows” (a parody on Poe’s “Ulalume,” which shows that Bret Harte was as clever an imitator in verse as in prose); “Ramon,” “The Angelus.” (d) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—H. C. Merwin’s *Life of Bret Harte, with Some Account of the California Pioneers* (1911), is valuable for its description of conditions in early California as well as for its admirable treatment of Bret Harte. See also *Life*, by T. E. Pemberton (1903), with bibliography; *Life*, by H. W. Boynton, in *Contemporary Men of Letters Series*; and articles on Bret Harte, by G. K. Chesterton, in *Varied Types*; by John Erskine, in *Leading American Novelists*, and by R. H. Haweis, in *American Humorists*.

2. Clemens (Mark Twain). (a) SHORT STORIES.—*The Jumping Frog*, *A Dog’s Tale* (a story of anti-vivisection), and good short stories in the volumes, *Merry Tales* and *The £100,000,000 Bank Note*. (b) NOVELS.—*The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; *A Connecticut Yankee at King Arthur’s Court*. (c) STORIES OF TRAVEL.—*Innocents Abroad*, *A Tramp Abroad*, *More Tramps Abroad* (these books abound in Mark Twain’s peculiar humor). (d) HISTORICAL NOVELS.—*The Personal Recollections of Joan of Arc*, *The Prince and the Pauper*. (e) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—*My Mark Twain*, by W. D. Howells; *Mark Twain*, by A. Henderson; F. W. Halsey, in *Authors of Our Day in Their Homes*; E. F. Harkins, in *Little Pilgrimages*; W. L. Phelps, in *Essays on Modern Novelists*; *Mark Twain*, by A. B. Paine (serial in *Harper’s Magazine*, 1912). See also article on “Clemens,” in *The New International Year Book*, 1910.

3. Indiana School.—For the “Indiana School,” with meaning of the word “Hoosier,” see *The Hoosiers*, by Mere-

dith Nicholson, which includes Eggleston, J. W. Riley, Lew Wallace, Booth Tarkington, and others.

Hay. (a) POEMS.—“Little Breeches,” “Jim Bludso,” “The Enchanted Shirt,” and other poems may be found in the collection, *Pike County Ballads*. (b) HISTORICAL WORK.—*Castilian Days* (an estimate of Spanish political life). (c) NOVELS.—*The Bread Winners*, a novel of social and political life, is generally attributed to him. (d) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Articles by W. D. Howells, in *North American Review*, vol. 181, p. 343; article in *The Outlook*, vol. 80, p. 610; article on “John Hay and the Ballads,” by Mark Twain, in *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 49, p. 1530.

C. H. Miller.—Some selections from Miller's poems are given in Stedman and Hutchinson's *Library of American Literature* (vol. x), and Stedman's *American Anthology*. A revised edition of Miller's *Complete Poetical Works* was published at San Francisco in 1902. For criticism see W. M. Rossetti's article, “A New American Poet,” in *Eclectic Magazine*, vol. 77, p. 240; also Vedder's *American Writers of To-Day*; Stedman's *Poets of America*; H. V. Clarke, article on “The Poet of the Sierras,” in *Munsey's Magazine*, vol. 9, p. 308; E. B. Sherman, article on “Joaquin Miller,” in *The Critic*, vol. 29, p. 19.

Moody. (a) POEMS.—“Gloucester Moors,” “Road Hymn for the Start,” “Ode in Time of Hesitation,” “A Soldier Fallen in the Philippines,” to be found in *Gloucester Moors and Other Poems*. (b) LYRICAL DRAMA.—*The Masque of Judgment*. (c) BIOGRAPHY AND CRITICISM.—Article in *The Outlook*, vol. 96, p. 486; article in *The Dial*, vol. 49, p. 317; article on “Moody,” in *The New International Year Book*, 1910.

4. Other Western Writers.—For a general account of Eggleston, Booth Tarkington, Winston Churchill, Phillips, Owen Wister, Frank Norris, Robert Herrick, and other Western writers, see *Some American Story Tellers*, by F. T. Cooper; *Little Pilgrimages*, by E. F. Harkins; *Authors of*

Our Day in Their Homes, by F. W. Halsey. For Owen Wister see also the preface to his book, *Members of the Family*. For Frank Norris, see article by Milne B. Levick, in *The Overland Monthly*, vol. 45, p. 504; also article in *Putnam's Monthly*, vol. 6, p. 629. For Winston Churchill, see article "A Novelist and His Novels in Politics," by Stanley Johnson, in *The World's Work*, vol. 17, p. 11016. In the study of Western poetry, Edwin Markham's poems, and especially "The Man with the Hoe," should not be overlooked. This poem, like Bret Harte's "Heathen Chinee," is one of the few American poems which has affected the whole country.

Many other recent writers of eminence, not only in the West, but in all parts of the country, might be added to these lists. Such nature-writers as JOHN BURROUGHS, JOHN MUIR, and STEWART EDWARD WHITE, such story-writers and novelists as O. HENRY, JACK LONDON, ROBERT W. CHAMBERS, GERTRUDE ATHERTON, and many others. It was neither possible nor desirable to include all the recent writers of importance, in a brief sketch like the present, which is not intended to be complete.

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